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FILM & VIDEO

THE INDEPENDENT

MONTHLY



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FILM & VIDEO THE INDEPENDENT

January/February 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1

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National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Fine Print (800) 874-7082; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent media, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@aol.com. Second Class Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Independent Film & Video Monthly, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., NY, NY 10013. Publication of an advertisement in The Independent does not constitute an endorsement. AIVF/FIVF are not responsible for any claims made in an ad. Letters to The Independent Film & Video Monthly should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length. All contents are copyright of the Foundation for Independent Video and Film, Inc. Reprints require written permission and acknowledgement of the article's previous appearance in The Independent. The Independent is indexed in the Alternative Press Index.

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BY JERRY WHITE

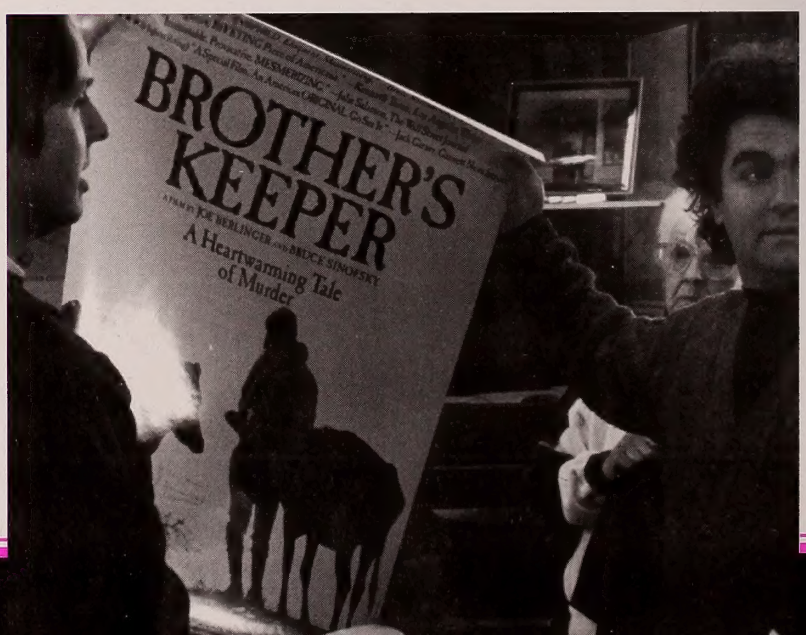


Chairman Mao paintings by Zhang Hongtu, courtesy Long Bow Group, Inc.

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Publisher's Note

Dear AIVF members and readers of The Independent:

Welcome to the first issue of the 19th year of *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*. We've made a number of design and editorial changes to the magazine over the past few years, and are in the process of redesigning our cover.

As a result of the changes we've been making, advertising revenues have increased by 74 percent since FY92, allowing us to take the magazine from an average of 48 pages to the current average of 68 pages—and growing (the issue in your hands is the largest ever). Newsstand sales have also increased 67 percent. Thanks to all our advertisers and readers for making this growth happen.

Organizationally, 1995 was quite a busy year. In February we received a Challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for our Information Services for the 21st Century Initiative. This grant has already been partially matched with major support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the New York Community Trust, as well as contributions from members and friends. In September we moved to new offices on Hudson Street, where we have doubled our space. In December we republished three of our most popular books, and we have begun the research on a fourth: *A Guide to Independent Film and Video Exhibitors in the U.S.*

We've also seen the tremendous growth of AIVF salons across the country, and in the coming year we hope to create opportunities for them to work together. Regional issues of the magazine continue to provide lively coverage of the dynamic independent work going on throughout the entire country. And we plan to have a Web site in place early this year.

As proud as we feel of these accomplishments, we're also mindful of the fact that our field has experienced a number of devastating blows recently, and it is probable that there will be difficult times ahead. While it is gratifying to see the emergence of some new opportunities for independents, AIVF strongly believes that we must keep making the case for a public sector commitment to culture. After a number of years of reactive advocacy, we're now working proactively with many of our colleagues in the media and arts community to evolve a compelling vision of a positive "media future" and hopefully to become more effective in achieving greater impact in both our public and private sector advocacy efforts.

We're preparing for the challenges ahead. And one fact has become increasingly clear: While AIVF can act as a catalyst and facilitator, if any effort is to succeed, your personal involvement at a local level will be critical. Whether it's electing "arts friendly" representatives to public office, or ensuring that your state telecommunications policy includes provisions for public interest and cultural concerns, or encouraging the entertainment industry to create broadly based programs of support for independents, it will only happen through the effort and commitment of numbers of concerned individuals working collaboratively.

So, take a deep breath, get lots of rest, don't forget your vitamins—we need you to stay healthy for the work ahead.

RUBY LERNER
publisher, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*
executive director, Association of Independent Video & Filmmakers and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

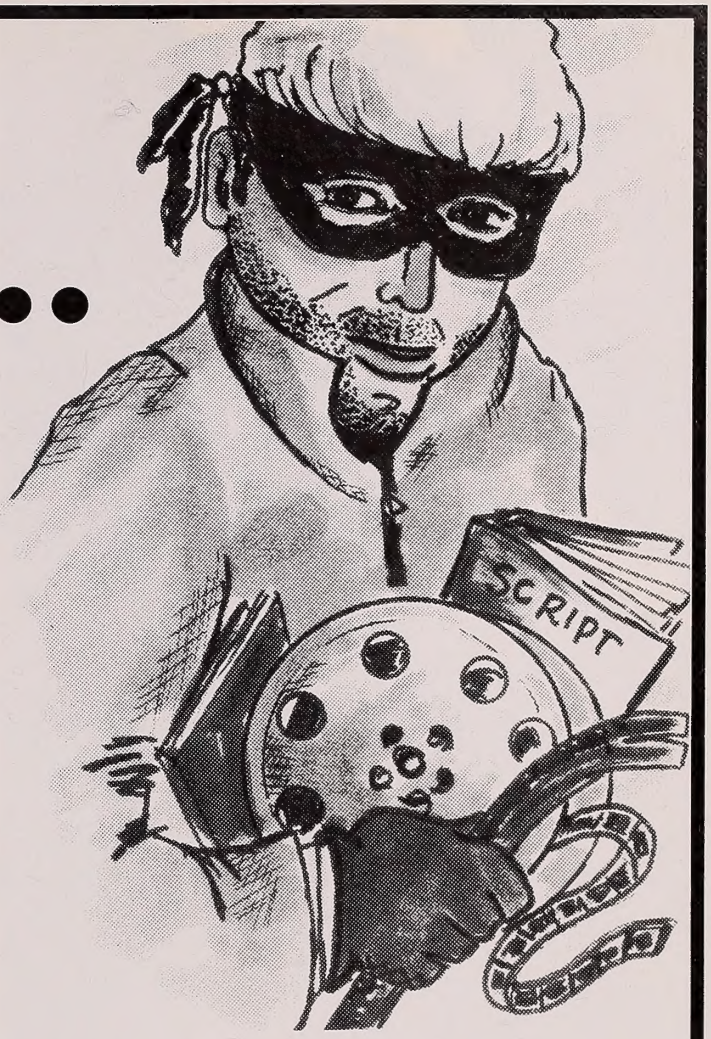
IT'S TIME TO MOBILIZE

In the last few years, the arts community has been vilified by far right and conservative politicians who are eager to lay waste to public support for the arts and humanities. These vituperative attacks have mischaracterized and misconstrued the importance of arts and culture to our society both spiritually and financially. The following facts show just how important the arts are to the economy and the voting public. Next time a politician wants your vote, ask about his/her position on the government's role in supporting culture. It's time to mobilize. Use the facts:

- On a national level, nonprofit arts organizations generate an estimated $37 billion in economic activity and return $3.4 billion in federal income taxes to the U.S. Treasury each year.
- The arts create jobs, increase the local tax base, boost tourism, spur growth in related businesses (hotels, restaurants, printing, etc.), and improve the overall quality of life for our cities and towns.
- For every dollar the National Endowment for the Arts invests in communities, there is a 20-fold return in jobs, services and contracts.
- Last year, $123 million in NEA grants leveraged more than $1.3 billion in private and public matching funds. These public-private partnerships stimulate a significant return on a small investment, thus emphasizing the importance of federal funding to help nonprofit arts organizations generate revenue.
- One Endowment dollar attract $11 and more for the arts from state, regional, and local arts agencies, foundations, corporations, businesses, and individuals.
- More than 1.3 million Americans are employed in the not-for-profit arts industry.
- The National Endowment for the Arts costs each American only $ .64 per year (based on last year's budget level).
- A recent poll indicated that a full 60 percent of the American people believe that "the federal government should provide financial assistance to arts organizations, such as art museums, dance, opera, theater groups, and symphony orchestras." 56 percent say they "would be willing to pay $15 more in their own taxes per year to support federal government efforts in the arts."
- Private donations (which vary from year to year) or increased ticket prices (which would affect arts institutions' mission to reach a broader audience) will not be able to replace a loss of federal funding.

AIVF ADVOCACY

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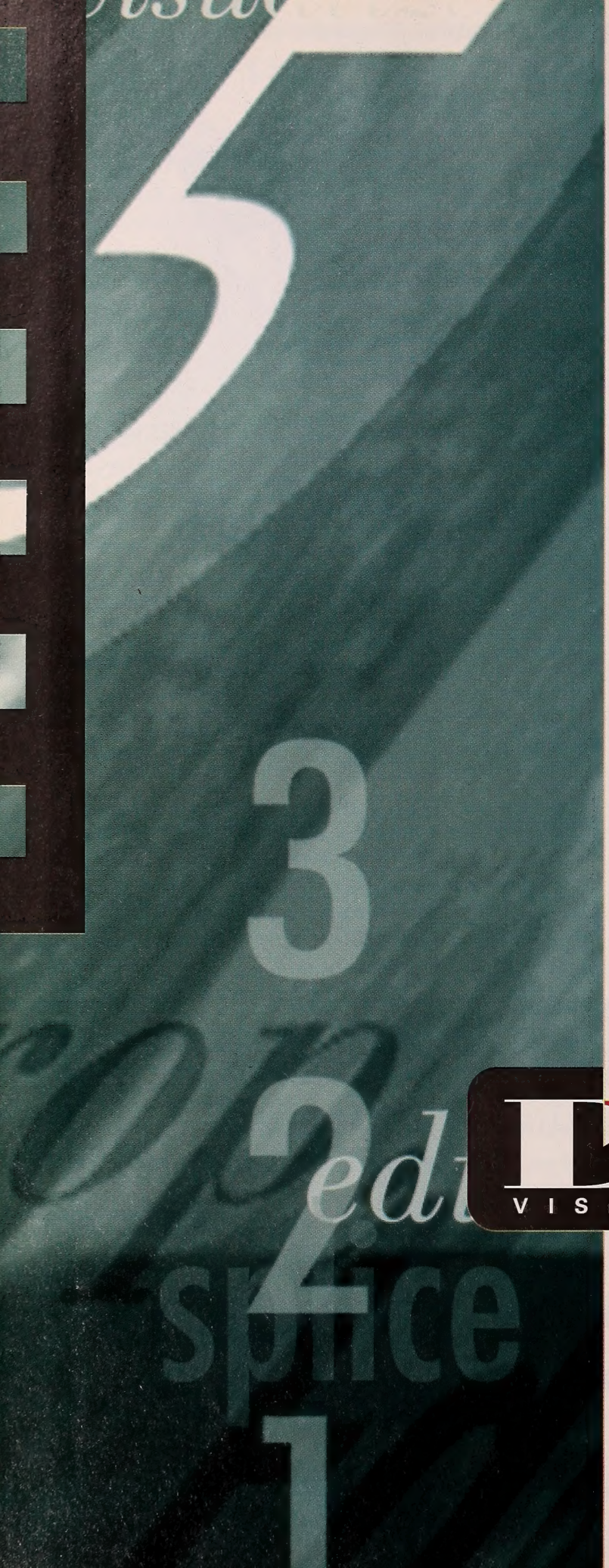
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NEA ON THE EDGE

Discipline Programs Dismantled

Media News

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

THE DEVASTATING CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET CUT proposed for the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) is nearly a *fait accompli*. On September 19, in their zeal to restructure, if not eliminate, this country's federal arts and humanities programs, a House-Senate conference committee agreed to reduce the NEA's already ravaged budget by another 40 percent, granting the beleaguered agency a mere $99.5 million for fiscal year 1996. The NEA operating budget for 1995 was $163 million. In contrast, the NEA received $176 million in 1992. The cut will be official once the Senate and House vote on the final Interior Appropriations Bill. Because funding was approved for one year only, the agency will be forced to undergo another budget appropriation review in 1996 to determine its FY 1997 budget. A provision calling for the abolishment of the NEA within two years was rejected.

Budget cuts and internal restructuring will radically alter the 30-year-old agency. As of 1996, most individual artists fellowships will have been abolished; discipline-based departments eliminated and replaced by "theme concentrations"; and content restrictions expanded.

Not content with fettering the agency financially, the committee adopted the restrictive language contained in the Senate version of the Interior Appropriations Bill, which includes funding for the NEA. The amendment, submitted by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), denies funds for works of art that "denigrate the religious objects or religious beliefs or the adherent of a particular belief" or "depicts or describes in a patently offensive way, sexual or excretory activities or organs."

Responding to the committee's inclusion of the Helms amendment, NEA chairwoman Jane Alexander stated, "We believe that stringent restrictions on content are anathema to artists and the creative process and ultimately may cost the American taxpayers more money, as they surely will be challenged in the courts." First Amendment lawsuits aside, the effect of the Helms language will be to further jeopardize funding for work that is politically, morally, or aesthetically controversial.

Significantly, the committee also discontinued grants to individual artists except in the areas of literature and playwriting, the Jazz Masters Awards, and the National Heritage Fellows. This means that mediamakers will no longer be able to apply as individuals for production funding.

Anticipating the massive budget cut, officials at the NEA instituted plans for a wide-ranging reorganization of the agency, including the elimination of 89 staff positions. As of December 19, the agency was left with a total of 148 positions, just over half the number it had in October of 1994.

This enormous staff reduction was accompanied by the creation of new grantmaking categories and the termination of separate discipline programs. Instead of individual programs for media, visual arts, dance etc., projects from various disciplines will be competing with one another. Project support will now be provided through four theme concentrations: Heritage and Preservation, Creation and Presentation, Education and Access, and Planning and Stabilization for arts institutions. Organizations may submit only one application per year to one of the four categories.

At this time, the NEA is unclear as to how project requests will be interpreted and fitted into the four theme areas. Likewise, the agency has yet to determine whether an organization's sole grant application may contain several dis-

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MEDIA NEWS

tinct projects, or whether one project may have multiple components. In other words, how or even if individuals' proposals will be accepted by arts organizations for possible submission to the NEA is unknown. What is clear is that the NEA's new configuration will substantially reduce the number of grant applications.

The agency has also instituted major changes in the panel review process. Previously, applications were reviewed by peer panels — thus, media projects were evaluated by media professionals, dance projects by dance experts, and so on. Now there will be a two-tier panel review process. Each application will be received first by the appropriate discipline specialist on staff, who will then critique and evaluate project requests with a panel of experts in that field. Those applications judged to be outstanding will be submitted to a second panel that will include experts from other arts disciplines for final judgment and grant approval.

By this year, most individual artists fellowships will have been abolished, discipline-based departments eliminated, and content restricted.

According to the NEA's press office, the idea behind the second-tier review panel is to foster a cross-disciplinary approach among artists and art organizations, allowing for a wider perspective on the review panel and encouraging artists to work together. But it seems likely to penalize smaller, lesser-known organizations which will have to compete with widely recognized institutions. For example, a low-budget collective like Paper Tiger TV in New York might well have a difficult time vying for support against a weighty, high profile entity like Boston's WGBH.

The NEA's shrinking monies and reorganization may well be calamitous for independent film- and videomakers. These changes come on the heels of the elimination in 1994 of the NEA's regional regrant programs, which funneled funds to individual mediamakers through such institutions as the American Film Institute and Appalshop. With the cessation of direct grants to individuals working in media arts; and the fact that very few state arts councils fund media, mediamakers are left with severely limited sources of federal and state funding. Moreover, those regional arts councils that do fund media, such as the New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA), will be forced to operate with fewer dollars because of the reduction in grant monies from the NEA.

A spokesperson for NYSCA stated that the reduction in funds from the NEA would most certainly have a "detrimental impact" on the agency, and on other state arts groups as well. NYSCA uses NEA grant money for operating expenses and staffing. Over the last five years, NYSCA has gone from 110 staff members to approximately 55, and will probably have to cut jobs again this year. The difficulty of maintaining programs and distributing grants will be an even greater challenge for the organization in the upcoming years.

The NEA will issue a new guideline booklet early this year describing the four theme categories and outlining eligibility requirements and review criteria.

CLEO CACOULIDIS

Cleo Cacoulidis is advocacy coordinator for the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers.

FCC TO GET THE AX?

While the Federal Communications Commission might not spring foremost to mind on a list of friends of independent mediamakers, the FCC does enforce federal requirements, like that for public access TV, that to some extent protect public interests in the radio, broadcast television, and cable industries. But now an outspoken group of Republican Congress members, apparently not content with the agency's largely pro-industry rulings during the past year, are calling for the FCC's elimination and the privatization of all communications spectrum.

At the head of the assault is Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA). According to reports in the *Washington Post* and elsewhere, in the early days of the 104th Congress Gingrich held a private dinner with CEOs of the nation's major media and telecommunications companies. He told the gathering he planned to preempt state regulation, transfer control of the AT&T con-

sent decree from the courts and the Department of Justice to the FCC, and then eliminate or downsize the latter.

The Progress and Freedom Foundation, a Washington DC-based conservative thinktank closely allied with Gingrich, has issued a comprehensive report on how and why the FCC should get the ax. The report accuses the FCC of delaying the entry of new technologies and stifling competition in communications markets. It proposes that the agency be replaced with a vastly smaller "Office of Communications Policy" to be overseen by the President.

The report proposes a three-step process that would first eliminate almost every FCC regulation governing broadcasting, cable, and telephone markets. (The report does not, however, call for the repeal of laws and regulations on indecent speech over telephones and mass media, although Gingrich was in fact outspoken against such provisions being included in the Senate and House telecom bills.) Next would go the FCC's role as "traffic cop" of the airwaves, giving incumbent broadcasters sole ownership of spectrum they are now using. All unused spectrum space could be claimed by the private sector, and if more than one party laid claim to the same spectrum, it would be auctioned off. Proceeds would go towards reduction of the federal deficit, and not, as suggested in some alternate proposals before Congress, to a fund for educational technologies or public broadcasting.

Meanwhile, House Subcommittee Chairman Jack Fields (R-TX) has also called for substantial reductions in the FCC's duties, promising to undertake a large-scale review of the FCC to make it "a more user-friendly entity" by eliminating all "unnecessary" spending and activities. One of the FCC offices Fields proposes eliminating is its antitrust enforcement division, which he asserts duplicates the functions of that office in the Department of Justice. Another is the FCC's equal opportunity employment enforcement division, which Field claims is made redundant by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT) previously tried but failed to defund the FCC's EEO enforcement office. Fields will have the opportunity to attempt a similar maneuver when the House considers the FCC's authorization legislation sometime this year.

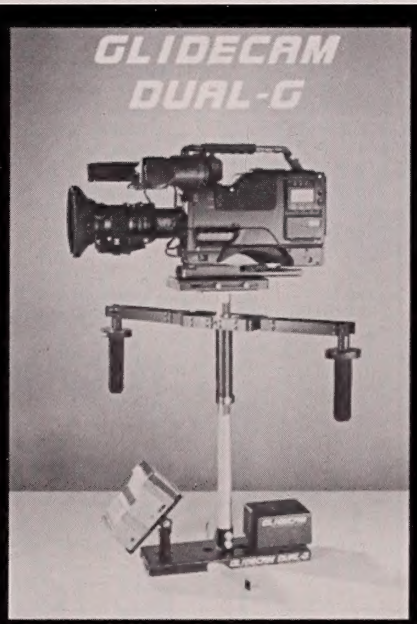
Few defenders of the FCC have so far come forward: Industry generally favors deregulation, while public interest groups have claimed that the FCC has already all but abandoned its man-

MEDIA NEWS

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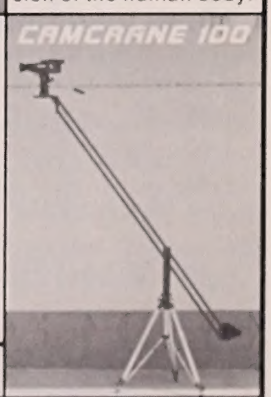


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date, laid out in the Communications Act of 1934, to act in the "public interest, convenience and necessity."

Ironically, both the House and the Senate have passed omnibus telecommunications legislation that would give the FCC over 80 new statutory tasks, most of them designed to ensure competition among the markets the FCC oversees. Some telecom experts speculate that the Republican "abolish the FCC campaign" is intended more to bring attention to the perceived need for further deregulation than actually to destroy the agency. Explains Jeffrey Chester of the Center for Media Education, "Even the Republicans realize they need the FCC."

GIGI B. SOHN

Gigi Sohn is deputy director of Media Access Project in Washington, D.C.

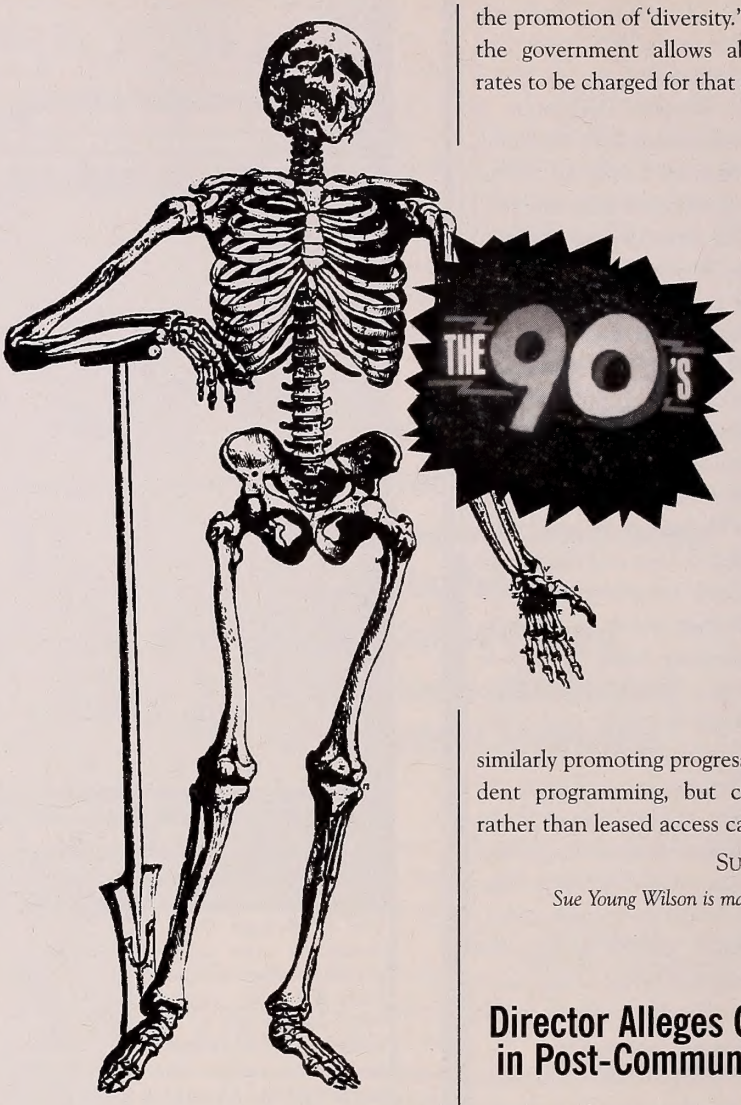
R.I.P. The 90's Channel

The stroke of midnight on November 1, 1995 saw the death of more than the Druidic calendar year. At that instant The 90's Channel, the widely known liberal public affairs cable channel that has been fighting for its life for years, finally gave up the ghost in the face of a massive rate hike by the cable company from which it leases its carriage.

The cable operator, Denver-based Tele-Communications Inc. (TCI), asked The 90's Channel to start coughing up $250,000 per month for access after its previous contract expired in October 1995. "It was just not possible for the channel to pay that much," says Dani Newsum, communications director of the Boulder-based 90's Channel. Neither party will say what the channel used to pay under the old contract, but Newsum mentions that the channel made a counteroffer, which TCI turned down, of $7,000 per month.

TCI, the country's largest cable operator, first tried to drop The 90's Channel in 1992. After 90's Channel president John Schwartz took TCI to court, the two parties negotiated an agreement that TCI would continue to carry the programs on their seven full-time cable channels through the end of October ["The 90's Channel's Challenge," July 1995].

LaRae Marsik, TCI's director of communications, argues that the rate that The 90's Channel was asked to pay is "definitely comparable" to that paid by the other leasers of access from the cable company. "TCI made a good faith effort to negotiate a leased access agreement with The 90's Channel in accordance with FCC rules, and on terms which other leased access programmers have accepted." She asserts that the issue is purely a monetary one and has nothing to do with content.



The 90's Channel gave up the ghost on November 1.

The 90's Channel filed petitions with the Federal Communications Commission to try to get an emergency stay of the rate increase and to challenge its legality. But the FCC has denied the first petition and made a preliminary statement that the new rates appear legal.

Newsum says of the decision, "When Congress added the requirement to the federal cable law that cable companies lease channels, the language it used was [about] the promotion of 'diversity.' But if in practice the government allows absolutely ruinous rates to be charged for that access, then what you have is empty legislation."

She says The 90's Channel may appeal the matter further. Meanwhile, Schwartz plans to keep recruiting cable stations to carry Free Speech TV, a companion project similarly promoting progressive and independent programming, but carried on public rather than leased access cable channels.

SUE YOUNG WILSON

Sue Young Wilson is managing editor of The Independent.

Director Alleges Censorship in Post-Communist Poland

Players, by Polish filmmaker Ryszard Bugajski, was scheduled to open in Warsaw last August and then enjoy a U.S. premiere in Chicago on September 16, the first night of the Seventh Annual Polish Film Festival at the Film Center of the School of the Art Institute. It did neither. In Poland, the opening of the film, which Bugajski describes as a "political



thriller and satire" about the 1990 Polish elections, was delayed for two months, until October 13, and was also postponed in Chicago, missing the festival.

The explanation the Film Center got from a festival cosponsor for the pulling of the movie was that the subtitles were not ready. But according to Bugajski—whose previous film *The Interrogation* was banned in Poland for seven years [see "Spring Takes Time: Films from East Germany and Poland," Oct. 1990]—the delay of *Players* stemmed from censorship.

Players was financed by Polish state television and the Ministry of Culture, which still fund almost all Polish feature films. Recently, Bugajski charges, one or both agencies, fearful of political risk, have held up the release of his and several other controversial films until certain scenes were cut.

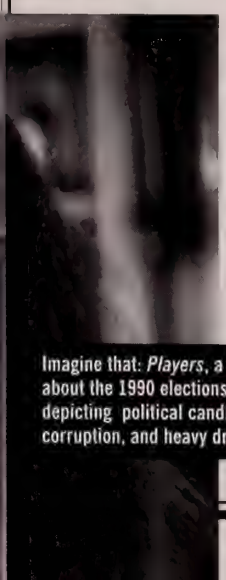
At a preview of *Players*, he says, representatives from both agencies were present. "The television bosses said the film showed cynicism, corruption, and heavy drinking, so that no candidate looks good [and that] it depict[ed] personalities in such a bad light that it could possibly lead to litigation." Bugajski says he had to make a number of cuts—"shots of either documentary or dramatic footage that they considered derogatory to the characters—before the "bosses" would release the film.

"The essential difference between the Communist era and today," the filmmaker adds, "is that it's no longer clear what values and principles are being defended by the Ministry of Culture. *The Interrogation* was called anti-socialist, which meant against the government. Now . . . [w]hat's demanded from you is not very clear. No one says, 'We are censoring for political reasons,' but, 'People may sue you—or sue us, the Ministry of Culture and state television, as your backers.'

"That's the way censorship works now in Poland, and I think it is very clever."

KAREN ROSENBERG

Karen Rosenberg is a film critic with a special interest in Eastern Europe. She has written recently for the Index on Censorship, In These Times, *and* The Women's Review of Books.



Imagine that: *Players*, a thriller by Ryszard Bugajski about the 1990 elections in Poland, was censored for depicting political candidates engaged in "cynicism, corruption, and heavy drinking." Courtesy filmmaker

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JEAN ROY
festival director
CRITICS WEEK AT CANNES

BY HOWARD FEINSTEIN


Courtesy Cannes Film Festival

AFTER THE DUST SETTLED AT LAST YEAR'S Cannes Film Festival, word has it, the wrath of the umbrella organization fell on tiny Critics Week (Semaine de la Critique). Most Cannes attendees agreed that 1995 was a weak year for the official Competition, Un Certain Regard, and even the Director's Fortnight. It seems that Critics Week received attention way out of proportion to its small size: seven features and seven shorts.

"When you go to the most famous restaurants, you don't have a wide choice," explains Jean Roy, director general of Critics Week for the past 12 years. "If you see a menu where there is steak, sauerkraut, and couscous, you can be sure it's a bad joint." There is charm in his heavy accent, short stature, and impish laugh, which is usually reserved for his own witty, probably well-rehearsed, metaphors.

"Taking only seven films is an advantage. In the Competition, you have to put in 24 films, just because you have 24 slots. It's impossible to find 24 masterpieces after Berlin and Venice, which want 24 masterpieces, too. So each year you have in the Competition five great films, six films which are okay, and films which just fill a spot. We at Critics Week just want to show the best stuff."

The French Film Critics Guild created Critics Week back in 1962 to provide a showcase for all of the new waves emerging around the world. "The tuxedoed audience wouldn't have supported these kinds of films," explains Roy (pronounced something like *hwah*), who has been a member of the selection committee for 17 years. Critics Week operates on a minuscule 1 million franc ($210,000) budget, 50 percent from the state, and 50 percent from private sponsors, like Mercedes Benz. It receives office space and free projection in the Palais du Festivals from the festival itself, though Roy hastens to add that it is "absolutely independent." Feature entries must be a first or second effort and the director must be unknown. "We wouldn't take a second feature, for example, if the first won a Palme d'Or. That would be stupid." What he cannot describe is the kind of work he and the other six committee members might want to show. "Critics Week is more about a general opinion of what the French critics think is the present situation of film," he says.

Roy has been the lead film reviewer for the Paris Communist Party daily *L'Humanité* for 10 years. ("You wouldn't call it 'official.' I don't receive instructions from the Central Party." He laughs again.) Roy is also vice president of the international organization of film critics, FIPRESCI, and general secretary of the French Film Critics Guild.

Last year alone, Roy watched around 300 features and 300 shorts in 35 countries. If he takes to something, he sends it back to Paris for a collective committee screening. In New York, Roy screened "something like 45 features and a lot of shorts." (Filmmakers must pay the projection costs at Tribeca Film Center. "There is no help from the government. The U.S. is the only country in the world where we have to charge.") "[U.S. liaison] Sandy Mandelberger's job is to let the entire community know I am coming and to handle prints. He doesn't filter them; he is doing a technical job. We don't want to take a chance that we'd miss something, as these directors are all newcomers."

From what he saw in the States, Roy and the committee chose two features in 1995. One pure American indie is Queens-based Hal Salwen's delightful telephone-comedy, *Denise Calls Up* (which has since been picked up by Sony Pictures Classics). For Roy, *Denise* recalls the screwball comedies of Leo McCarey, Gregory La Cava, Howard Hawks, and Preston Sturges, and he compares its ensemble characters to the "schizophrenic New York intellectual petit bourgeoisie like in the films of Woody Allen." He does not lose sight of his audience. "When I start laughing when I'm alone in the theater, and I have already spent 12 hours watching films that day, then I know the reaction will be good at the festival." (The Camera d'Or jury awarded *Denise Calls Up* honorable mention [second prize] for best first film of the entire festival.)

The other selection was the action thriller *Mute Witness*, an English-language German production by the German-educated British national Anthony Waller that was shot entirely in Russia. (It was submitted by Sony Classics.) Rounding out 1995's slate were NYU graduate Steve Wang's impressive *Daughter-in-Law* (Taiwan); Stephen Williams' *Soul Survivor* (Canada); Chris Newby's *Madagascar Skin* (UK); Fernando Merinero's *The Children of the Wind* (Spain); and Frank Van Passel's *Manneken Pis* (Belgium). U.S. shorts included Richard Sears's *An Evil Town* and Robert Harders's *The Last Laugh*. Three prizes were awarded, but losers should not be disheartened. "Everyone receives a diploma."

Roy is optimistic about the state of U.S. indie filmmaking. "I think it's very vivid and lively. There are so many people making films that some *have* to be good. You have to struggle to survive, but you are very lucky to be American, to speak English. You are the wolf. If you are the sheep, you have to have protection to survive."

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No wonder the big guys are *très jaloux.*

U.S. deadline: March 15. Contact: Sandy Mandelberger, International Media Resources: (212) 941-1464; fax: 431-0329. Contact in France: tel: (33) (1) 45 75 68 27; fax: (33) (1) 40 59 03 99.

Howard Feinstein is a New York–based film critic who writes regularly for the Guardian *(U.K.) and* Out.

TALKING HEADS

JANE BALFOUR
foreign sales agent

BY MICHELE SHAPIRO

STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION ABOUT FOREIGN sales agents with just about anyone in the business, and inevitably Jane Balfour's name will come up. The British native started the London-based Jane Balfour Films in 1983. Since then, Balfour has become the Michael Ovitz of the nonfiction film world, navigating overseas markets for scores of documentarians and, more recently, a handful of feature filmmakers.

Prior to her foray into foreign sales, Balfour worked as a hospitality officer for the London and Edinburgh film festivals. In the early eighties she was persuaded by friends to start her own business. They weren't just *any* friends, however. They were the husband and wife filmmaking team of Chris Hegedus and D. A. Pennebaker (*The War Room*). "I loved her perception of independents and her honesty and integrity," says Hegedus. "She is a passionate believer in our type of filmmaking, which is rare."

Hegedus and Pennebaker struck up a friendship with Balfour at the Edinburgh festival in the late seventies. Balfour peddled some of the couple's films to overseas markets while working at Corey Films, a London-based international sales company. When Balfour left Corey to start her own business, the duo was first to sign on for representation. She took on their hour-long project *Rockaby*, which traces the production of a Samuel Beckett play from rehearsal through opening night. Balfour scored a coup when the BBC purchased the documentary, but she had no idea at the time how all-consuming her job would soon become.

"I worked out of my back bedroom and traveled 105 days out of the year," she recalls over breakfast at the posh Steinberger Hotel during the 1995 Berlin International Film Festival, where Balfour Films was representing 10 works, including Tony Buba's blue-collar drama *No Pets* and Dina Marie Chapman's tongue-in-cheek documentary *Rhinoskin: The Making of a Movie Star.*

Other films from the United States Balfour currently represents are Steven



Courtesy Jane Balfour Films

Martin's *Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey*, about the bizarre instrument and its maker; Alice Stone's *She Lives to Ride*, on women motorcyclists; Mirra Bank's *Nobody's Girls*, on frontiers-women of the American West; Ross McElwee's meditation on marriage, death, and family, *Time Indefinite*; and Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's *Brother's Keeper*, on the trial of a rural recluse for the murder of his brother.

Buyer gatherings such as the European Film Market in Berlin and MIP-TV in Cannes are staples for Balfour, who uses them to strengthen her ties with buyers as well as filmmakers. She envisions each market as a link in a continuous chain. "If my films do well in Berlin, it creates a reputation

for them when I go to MIP," she says.

According to Balfour, there is no "market" per se for documentaries, because most larger stations opt to produce their own shows. However, much of Balfour's success has come from her relationship with the BBC and Channel 4 in Great Britain—two tough nuts for any documentary maker to crack.

Pennebaker and Hegedus consider her the reason why *The War Room* got off the ground. "Only individual donors gave us money in the States," Hegedus recalls. "Jane arranged a deal with the BBC for which we were given some production money up front. . . [W]e relied upon European sales, and the film was sold to Australian television as well as German, French, and Finnish TV."

Balfour is aware of the poor reputation foreign sales reps have garnered within the filmmaking community, thanks to the multitude of disreputable swindlers who prey upon those unfamiliar with the foreign sales game. But the advantages of recruiting a reputable agent are significant. "You can sell a film yourself, but it's both time-consuming and expensive. Also, most buyers prefer to work with agents."

Balfour receives 5 to 25 videotapes per week from filmmakers seeking representation. Out of those, she takes on between 50 and 100 per year. "I look for well-made films that tell interesting stories from unusual angles," she said. "High production values and themes that transcend national borders are also important."

What's the current asking price for documentaries? According to Balfour, rates vary considerably depending on a number of factors, such as the country size and the rights optioned. She estimates that half-hour docs usually fetch anywhere from just a few dollars to $60,000 maximum. "Smaller stations...only pay between $1,000 and $2,000," she says. On average, longer documentaries bring in between $14,000 and $200,000. She suggests using the *TV World Price Guide* as an indicator [available through TV World, 33/39 Bowling Green Lane, London EC1R OKA, England; (44 171) 837-1212; fax: 837-8250].

Balfour also handles independently produced fiction features, which she considers the United States' strength now. Among the U.S. feature titles Balfour currently represents are Todd Haynes's *Poison*; Amir Nader's *Manhattan by Numbers*; Steve Okazaki's *The Lisa Theory*; and Julia Reichert's *Emma and Elvis*. "There was a dearth of good fiction films a few years ago, but not anymore," she observed. "But there are a lot more agents handing fiction films than documentaries."

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Few, however, have namesakes in the States. Baby Jane, the daughter of Hegedus and Pennebaker, is now eight years old. When Hegedus was pregnant, Balfour stayed at her apartment during the Independent Feature Film Market. Hegedus recalls, "She helped out so much that I told her if I had a girl, I'd name it after her." Since then, Balfour's help has continued in other important ways. "She goes off with our films as if they were gems and sells them. She has a fighting attitude with all [the projects she reps]," says Hegedus. "That's what has made her so successful."

Jane Balfour Films, Ltd., Burghley House, 35 Fortess Rd., London NW5 1AD, England; (44-171) 267-5392; fax: 267-4241.

Michele Shapiro is film editor of Time Out New York.

KATHLEEN DORE

Executive VP & General Manager

BRAVO/INDEPENDENT FILM CHANNEL

By Minne J.M. Hong

When Kathleen Dore and the other folks behind the Independent Film Channel looked at the growing success of independently produced films, they knew they were on to something big. "We thought it was critical to be first in the marketplace," says Dore, who was then executive vice president and general manager of Bravo, "and that *something* would happen for independent films on TV. If you're first, and you do it well, you define the medium."

Under Dore's direction, the fledging Independent Film Channel (IFC), a 24-hour cable channel owned and operated by Bravo's parent company, Rainbow Programming Holdings, has attempted to do precisely that. Since its launch on September 1, 1994, the IFC has expanded to more than three million subscribers on cable and satellite systems nationwide, and the demand is growing. Despite some initial setbacks in larger markets (IFC is not yet available in Manhattan due to Time Warner's lack of channel capacity), viewer requests for the channel have been surprisingly high, particularly in mid-size cities in the Midwest.

"The response has been extremely rewarding, both from the film community and the public at large," says Dore. "It reconfirms our feeling that there was a market out there for this type of programming. The most common response from viewers is that 'There's nothing like this.'" Indeed, outlets like Bravo, the Sundance Film Channel, and the Vanguard Cinema showcase on Cinemax may be increasingly important as public television faces a more uncertain future.

While its initial lineup drew largely from foreign and classic titles, IFC has gradually introduced more American independent films. The fall '95 lineup, for example, includes the world television premiere of Nancy Savoca's sleeper *Household Saints*, actress Illeana Douglas's short *Boy Crazy, Girl Crazier*, and Adam Simon's *The Typewriter, the Rifle, and the Camera*, a feature-length documentary on director Sam Fuller that is an IFC coproduction. IFC is also adding an array of informational spots giving background on the independent film scene, from background interviews with filmmakers to film festival coverage. At this year's Independent Feature Film Market (IFFM), for instance, IFC lent camcorders to indie filmmakers Doug Block, Matthew Harrison, Tony Chan, Leslie Harris, Michael Almereyda, and Amy Hobby, for each to shoot footage for a two-to-three minute short film highlighting their perceptions of the market experience.


Courtesy Bravo

Along the same lines, the channel plans to branch its schedule into "programming strands" to provide a balance of shorts, foreign films, star vehicles, documentaries, classics, cult classics, and works by emerging artists. "We're going to show classics and foreign films inasmuch as they have helped defined the genre," explains Dore, "but the majority will be American independents, which is the core of our programming."

Following the general rule of thumb for defining independent film, the IFC mission's statement says the channel aims to present films "made outside the Hollywood studio system." But what exactly does that mean? Dore explains, "I don't know if there is a complete definition of independent films, but we look for films that express a different sort of artistry, outside a studio demand for a formulaic plot. In some instances they may raise a social consciousness and express an individual vision."

In an effort to scout out new visions, IFC has launched extensive campaigns inside the two most heavily traveled routes for emerging filmmakers: film schools and festivals. The channel has tapped New York University's Tisch School of the Arts as the flagship school of its University Advisory Board, which also includes the University of Southern California, the School of Visual Arts, Boston University, and Columbia University. IFC also has a presence in covering or sponsoring several major film festivals, including the IFP Gotham Awards at IFFM, the New York Film Festival, the Virginia Film Festival, and the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival.

"We see a lot of material through the festivals," says Dore. "We're looking for talent and filmmakers who are interested in doing projects for us"

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Significantly, the channel has set up three programs to support new filmmakers: IFCheap (Independent Film Channel Helps Emerging Artists Produce), a fund from IFC profits to be disbursed by the Advisory Board; IFC Outstanding Student Award, a $10,000 cash award for a student filmmaker to produce his or her next film; and Short Shorts, targeting emerging filmmakers to produce shorts to be aired on IFC.

"We plan to produce eight to twelve original feature films and shorts a year," estimates Dore. "Our role may be differently structured, from providing finishing funds to coproduction." The channel's first original feature production, *The Typewriter, the Rifle, and the Camera*, is a coproduction between IFC and the British Film Institute.

Dore conveys the essence of the channel's objective through a personal anecdote about the kind of impact programming can carry. She recalls, "I grew up in Iowa in a university town. When I was in junior high, I went to an auditorium on campus. They were showing films outside of Hollywood—Truffaut and things like that—and it opened up a whole new way of looking at film. Basically, the work stood on its own and got to me on a very emotional level. And being moved by the story is what, at the end of the day, matters."

The Independent Film Channel, 150 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, NY 11797; (516) 364-2222.

Minne J.M. Hong is a New York-based freelance writer who writes on media for the Asian New Yorker, *the* Island Ear, *and* CineVue.

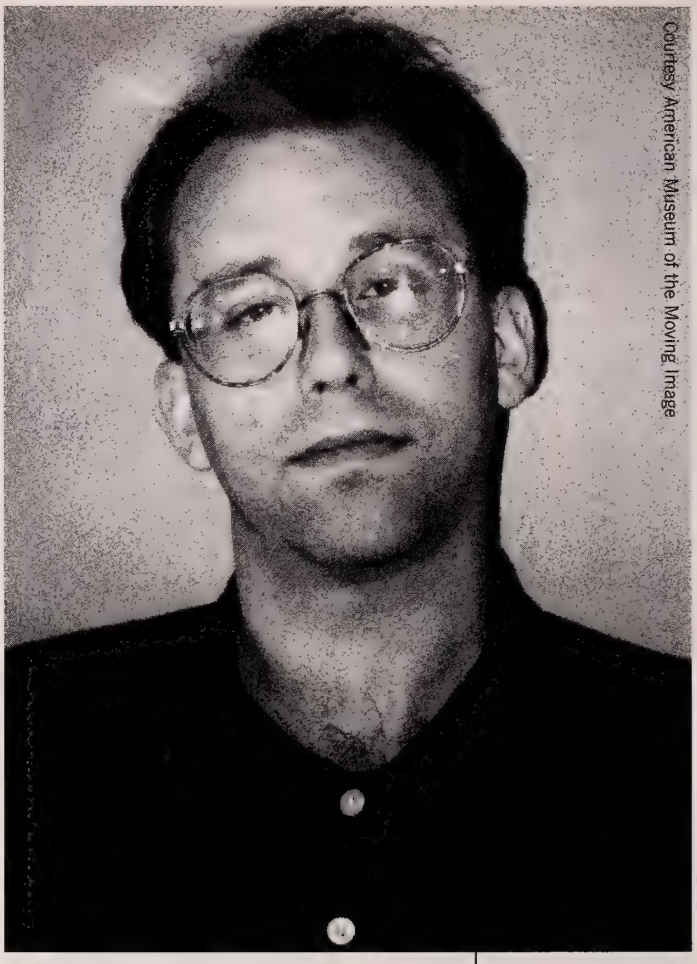
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CARL GOODMAN

curator of digital media

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

BY SUE YOUNG WILSON



Courtesy American Museum of the Moving Image

CARL GOODMAN MAY BE THE ONLY MUSEUM curator in the world to get envious phone calls from computer-game enthusiasts informing him that he has *the best job in the world*. And well they may say so. The shelves of Goodman's office at the American Museum of the Moving Image (AMMI) are crammed with the latest games on CD-ROM (no, he doesn't lend them out), and, as the first-ever full-time museum curator for digital media, he gets to play with (learn about, demonstrate) some of the neatest high-tech toys around.

Which isn't to say it isn't a *job*. "Basically, what I do has two layers. The first is to study and keep track of how computers are used to store images: in traditional film- and videomaking, and in new sorts of experiences where the computer mediates between the user and the information, as with CD-ROMs or QuickTime. The second is to employ those technologies—within and without the walls of AMMI—to make an interactive computer program or Web site," Goodman says seemingly in one breath (appropriately, he tends to talk at cyberspeed).

Goodman is considerably less gee-whiz about the latest hardware for its own sake than many riders of the multimedia bandwagon. There's also the matter of ideas. In pursuit of thoughtful, considered discussion of new media and its implications, Goodman developed the museum's popular MIEDIA ("Moving Images Enter the Digital Interactive Age") seminar series, which has been running since the fall of 1993. The seminars look at the role of digital technology in film and video production and showcases new technologies—CD-ROMs, virtual reality, on-line services, computer animation. A recent seminar featured powerhouse speakers from three moving image thinktanks: Glorianna Davenport of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab, Michael Naimark of Interval Research, and Ken Perlin of the Media Research Lab at New York University's Center for Digital Multimedia. MIEDIA mavens have also been treated to demos of 3DO gaming technology, independent CD-ROM production, digital Disney, and Hollywood's efforts to blend cinema and interactive technology.

Goodman, 29, has been at AMMI since shortly after its founding in 1988 and his own graduation from Wesleyan University, where he majored in philosophy and also studied music, having been brought up in a family of musicians in Philadelphia. He was "not a geek in college," he says, although he did own an early electronic sampling device, an 8-bit model that impressed his friends with its novelty ("They thought I was Merlin"). After college he spent a brief stint as a Wall Street headhunter and a composer of film, theater, and dance scores and jingles for TV commercials.

Then, in the fall of 1988, Goodman heard from AMMI founder and director Rochelle Slovin—whose children he had known in college—that the new museum planned to devote a small part of its exhibit to sound editing. A Fairlight digital/audio workstation was purchased, and Goodman was hired part-time to play with it until he had mastered its use and could demonstrate it to visitors. Goodman eventually found himself the

museum's resident digital media expert, and—with detours into museum public relations and the education department—his job evolved into the present one.

He's just finished putting together a dozen or so computer-based interactive displays in the museum's core exhibit, "Behind the Screen," which was recently expanded and updated at a cost of $3 million and opens in February. There are hands-on workstations where visitors can do their own automatic dialogue replacement or learn the working principles of animation by making a video flipbook with images of themselves. Goodman has set up other digital displays, like one of the Lightworks nonlinear editing system, to be demonstrated by a museum staffer, choosing to present the processes in their full complexity rather than simplify them—and sacrifice versimilitude—to the point where an untrained visitor could hope to attempt them. In this as in other aspects of his work, Goodman seems quite clear about his mission: "It's important, because they're not yet ubiquitous, as TV and film are, that people just *see* digital media and processes," he declares. "I try to educate them in an anxiety-free, neutral environment."

He's also curated such exhibits as one on the history of the video game—hence the temptingly laden office shelves—and another on cutting-edge home entertainment and software. He's become something of a digital pundit, writing a monthly column entitled "Scanner" for a Web site called Total New York (http://www.totalny.com). He consults about the use of the technology. And he fields a constant stream of phone calls from individuals wanting to talk cyberpunk or asking him to recommend a multimedia pro. (AMMI "is a bit of a hub," he says, "where people call you up and say, 'I need an animator. I need a so-and-so.' My headhunting experience has come in handy.")

Nonetheless, he refuses to speculate about the future of multimedia or its use in the film and video industries. "One of the things I love about this job is that I *don't* have to predict the future," he says. "You can't do that at this stage. All we know about the new computer media technologies is that they're quite significant and they'll greatly affect how we live and work and think. How exactly, which technologies exactly—that we don't know."

Sue Young Wilson is managing editor of The Independent.

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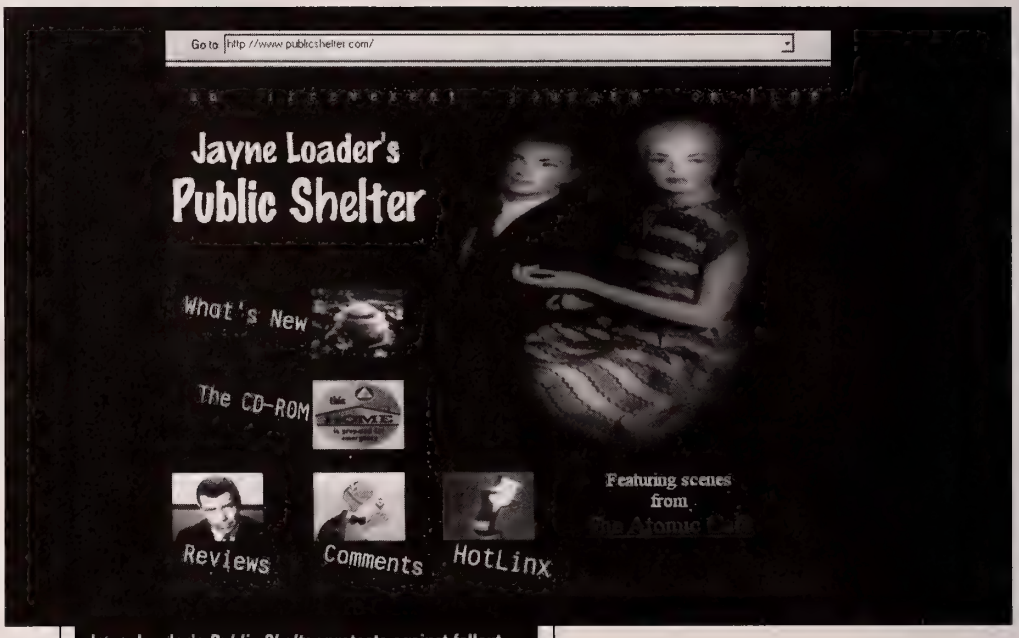
A Documentarian Goes Digital

THINKING ABOUT ABANDONING FILM- OR videomaking to join the Great Multimedia Rush? Take a hint from documentary-turned-multimedia-maker Jayne Loader, who advises that the infobahn may take one home to Texas, but it won't necessary lead to oil.

Two years ago Loader, who is best known as the co-creator of the film *The Atomic Cafe* (1982), a mocking collage of post-World War II propaganda, documentary, and newsreel footage about the atomic bomb, decamped from New York City to return to her hometown of Waxahachie, Texas. With husband Eric Schwaab, a 14-year veteran of Wall Street ("He handles the money end and lets me create"), Loader founded a CD-ROM production company, EJL Productions, to do a project about female aviators.

Then, last year, outraged by France's decision to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific, Loader decided that her protest—and first digital project—would be to "spen[d] the year putting everything I know—or could beg or borrow—about things atomic on CD-ROM."

This time Loader didn't have to spend years searching through dank government archives underneath Washington, D.C. Instead, she surfed government and other sites on the Internet and World Wide Web and downloaded more than 14,000 documents, many only recently declassified. She also hooked up with Greenpeace after a shipload of their protesters were seized by the French following the Pacific testing announcement and got access to their huge archives on nasty matters nuclear. And, of course, she revisited the materials she and Pierce and Kevin Rafferty had gathered for *The Atomic Cafe*—most of which hadn't fit into the 88-minute film. The CD-ROM contains 12 minutes of film footage from *Atomic Cafe*, which Loader had to license from the Archives Project, the team that collaborated on the film.



Jayne Loader's *Public Shelter* protects against fallout on the World Wide Web.
Courtesy EJL Productions

The other 28 minutes of video on the disk is public domain: *Atomic Cafe* outtakes or new, often freshly declassified clips.

Loader and Schwaab recruited their CD-ROM production team locally, via the Internet and computer conventions. Thomas Hughes, a 23-year-old computer whiz and Webmaster from Fort Worth, did much of the programming and maintains EJL's Web site (http://www.publicshelter.com/). Two Dallas-based companies, CircumStance and Vision Wise, did the interactive design work and provided production services. Only the project's three Portland-based musicians hail from outside Texas.

"There are tons of talented people out here, and, unlike in New York, they tend to be kind of underutilized, and therefore less expensive and more available," Loader says. "The main thing the process showed is that you *can* leave New York and still do this kind of work."

While Loader spent 14 long months combing online archives, she kept in touch with the rest of the team over the Internet. Hughes and some of the design team and musicians then "camped out" at Loader's house for the last four months of production.

The result: the CD-ROM *Public Shelter*, which takes *Atomic Cafe*'s found-footage concept fully cyber. Remarkably deep and capacious, *Public Shelter* contains roughly 1,600 text files, 75 video clips, 400 photographs, 10 hours of audio that include 18 original songs—in all, a full 15 MB of A-bomb-and-energy info—plus some suitably apocalyptic science fiction. Loader deliberately modeled the interface as though it were a Web site, with 20 home pages—"Los Alamos," "Medical Testing," "Peace"—accompanied by their own browsers. There is no imposed path through the material; no table of contents, narrative, or editorial comment. One wanders the virtual vaults and rifles the archives at will, happening on comic gems (a clip from the fifties animated educational film *Duck and Cover*, starring reptilian songster Bert the Turtle) and revelations of the terrible (audio memoirs from the spouses of Americans killed at home by fallout from the Nevada Test Site).

A downside to *Public Shelter*'s depth is that one needs quite the hardware setup to experience it as it was intended (or at all—this writer tried in vain to find a rental computer that could play the disk, until Loader solved the problem long-distance by asking a graphic designer friend to lend the use of her elaborate system). Although a 486 processor with Windows 3.1, 8 MB of RAM, a local bus video card with more than 256 colors, and a Windows-compatible soundcard will do the trick, ideally one should have a Pentium with 16 MB of RAM running Windows 95 and WaveTalkMIDI.

As for the money end of things: Loader says she's selling enough copies of *Public Shelter* "to keep the wolf from the door," but has hardly hit a gusher. While searching for the right distributor, she has been selling *Public Shelter* by mail and e-mail order from online sites, cybercafes, and film festivals where she has been invited to talk about the project.

She received "a bunch of distribution offers," she says, but "they were uniformly bad. In multimedia, I'm finding, one gets offered deals that a filmmaker would never expect or accept—like net profit deals with no advance. It's sort of like indie film was 30 years ago. There's no Sundance or anyplace else you can go where multimedia distributors are looking for product." Eventually she did find a distributor who offered a share of the gross profits, and at press time she has a deal inked out, though not yet signed.

Making *Public Shelter* has, if nothing else, renewed Loader's hotness on the lecture circuit; she's recently appeared at venues ranging from the New York Video Festival to Melbourne, Australia. Between speaking engagements, she's continuing work on her screenplay about women pilots in 1929 ("like *A League of Their Own* in the air"), which she intends to turn not into a movie but a CD-ROM that will do double-duty as a historical reference and a flight simulator game specifically for girls.

She's also starting yet another project with people met on the Internet, this one to provide public access to the Net for people in rural areas, inner cities, and so on who don't own computers. According to her husband—for at press time Loader was off at the Greater Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival—response to this latest foray on the information highway, at least, has been "overwhelming."

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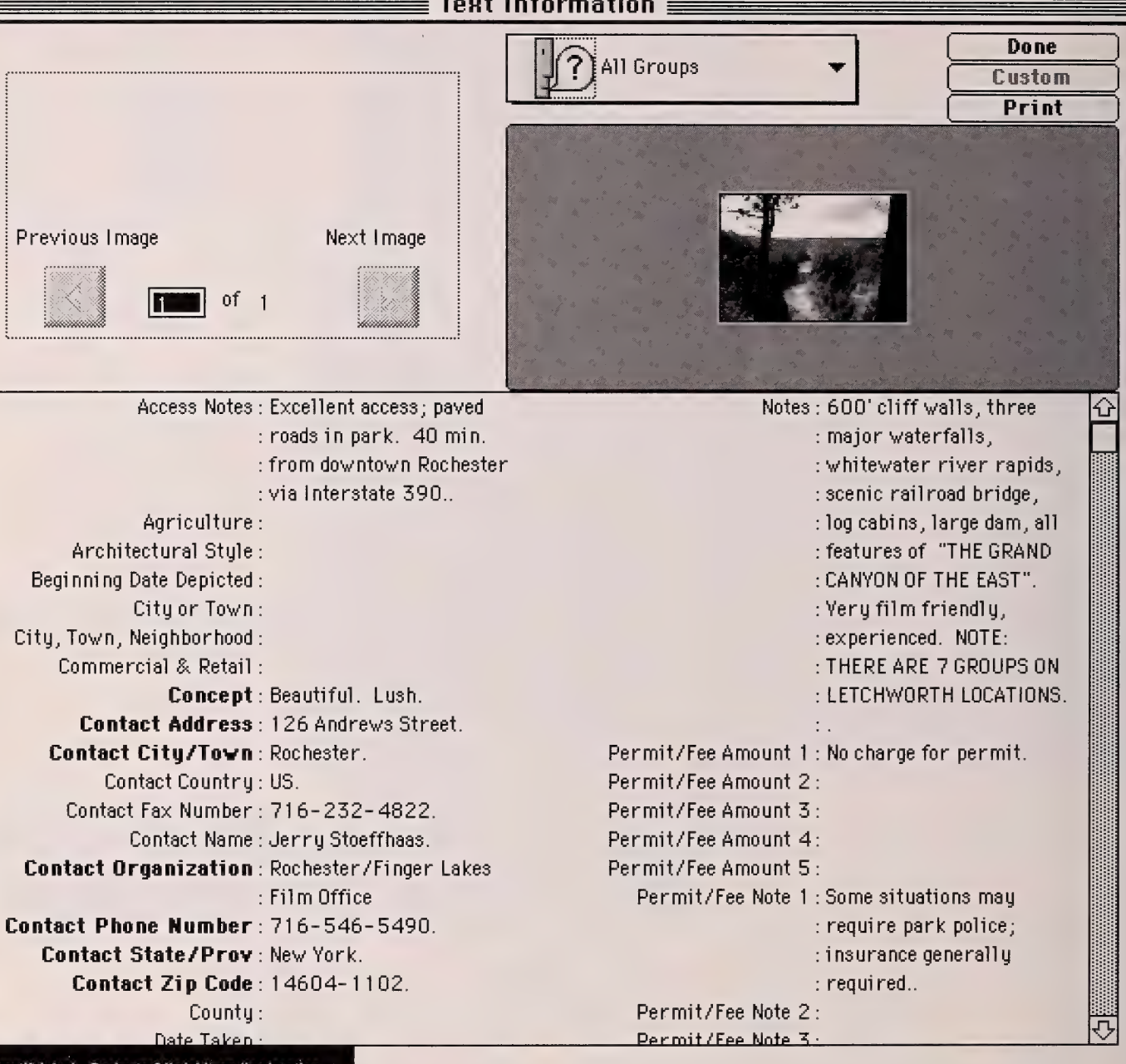
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Beautiful, lush...Rochester? Kodak's on-line location scouting service may help producers come up with unexpected possibilities for their shoots.
Courtesy Kodak

Kodak's On-line Shortcut for Location Scouts

TIRED OF WAITING WEEKS TO RECEIVE INFORMATION on potential locations for your film? Not sure of what the full range of options might be? Eastman Kodak is marketing a solution—an on-line location scouting service called the Eastman Exchange. The service features access to photo and location databases from approximately 40 film commissions, predominantly in the United States but including several international commissions as well.

Created under the auspices of the digital division of Kodak's Motion Picture and Television business unit, the Eastman Exchange was launched last spring after a two-year study to assess the needs of producers researching information on potential sites and film commissions seeking to further publicize their resources.

With Kodak aggressively seeking to position itself as the principal digital imaging provider in the burgeoning electronic marketplace, it comes as no surprise that Eastman Exchange's central feature is access to digital photographs. Nor is it any surprise that the on-line service requires the use of proprietary software: Kodak's Photo CD technology.

The start-up software costs $99. After this initial output, expenses are proportionate to use. Subscribers are charged only for on-line time ($1.92 per minute) with no monthly fee. The software is available for both Mac (at least System 7.1) and Windows (version 3.1 or later; with MS-DOS, version 5.0 or later). A minimum of 12 MB of memory is recommended for best results, and the software's modem compatibility is reasonably flexible (14.4 baud minimum). Both installation and general operations are simple and demand virtually no reconfiguration unless you are trying to work with insufficient memory.

Once on-line, the user interface is rela-

tively effortless. After selecting the film commissions you wish to browse, all you need to do is enter your search criteria (for instance, "trailer parks and rural and exterior"), similar to constructing a search on the Lexis/Nexis online research database. The service also provides pull-down lists of categories and characteristics, such as "Architectural style," "Facilities," or "Geography and Geology." You can choose whether to download all the images selected or just a sample; images are then displayed in contact sheet format.

Four categories of resolution and image compression are available. The degree of compression determines the retrieval time. Magnifying and decompressing images, which must be done while you are still on-line, can sometimes take a while. For example, viewing a single image as a "design proof" (the highest resolution available) can take one to two minutes, but a contact sheet of 10 "thumbnail sketches" (the lowest resolution) will take only about 30 seconds.

At present, the text-based information that accompanies the images is minimal. While the files designate a number of useful fields, such as permit types and pricing, the information is rarely filled in by the film commissions. Fortunately, location scouts needing these details have the option of using the service's bulletin board, which allows for direct e-mail correspondence with the film commissions. In fact, because of the ongoing interaction that scouting necessitates, the service's gateways to the commissions and its centralized message board may be its most immediately pragmatic features.

The bottom-line is that Eastman Exchange can facilitate the initial stages of location scouting, but follow-up and the evaluation of final site choices remain beyond the service's capacity. For now, what makes the service most interesting is not its immediate application but rather the implications it has for the future of the media business.

For Kodak, this service is only an initial step in its efforts to position itself as a dominant player within a digitized film industry. A more elaborate example is Kodak's collaboration with Pacific Bell's Media Park, a broadband communications network and "virtual production studio" designed to provide producers with access to a range of services. Both the Eastman Exchange and its stock photography counterpart, the Kodak Picture Exchange, are participating in the Media Park plan, as are such companies as stock footage provider Archive Films, digital postproduction company Pacific Ocean

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Post, and talent/casting database Screen Test On-Line. Scheduled to be fully active by late spring, Media Park will include access to information on locations, talent, equipment, props, and crew; the potential to generate and deliver animation, computer graphics, and audio online; the capability to locate, review, and license archival footage and sound effects owned by Kodak and other collaborators; and the capacity to screen and edit footage from several locations simultaneously, store the material electronically, and convert it to the required film or tape format when necessary. In short, a facility like Media Park would significantly diminish the problems of time and distance during all stages of production.

It remains to be seen how independents will fare in this process of consolidating services. The danger, of course, is that through deregulated business alliances, telecommunications companies can secure control over pricing while simultaneously making their services essential to all aspects of production. Pricing could be geared to studio budgets, with little incentive to cater to smaller, low-budget projects.

The flipside, however, is that prices will decrease as new systems and services are introduced and independents can gain low-cost access to yesterday's cutting-edge as more affluent producers move on to the latest high-end product. For all the rhetoric about the new digital age, in many respects it remains business as usual.

Eastman Exchange can be reached at (800) 816-2233. For further information on Pacific Bell's Media Park, call (800) 627-PARK.

YOSHA GOLDSTEIN

Yosha Goldstein is a freelance writer and independent videomaker living in Brooklyn.

Composer Contact! Plays Musical Matchmaker

IT MIGHT BE SAID OF FILMMAKERS AND MUSIC composers that never the twain shall meet. Since they move in different circles professionally, filmmakers needing an original score and composers struggling to build a portfolio of film work often have trouble finding one another. Now, Harvestworks has what it hopes is a solution. Formed in 1977 as a production and post-production facility for electronic musicians, Harvestworks has grown into a "career-service" organization for musicians and digital-media artists. After about a year of development, the nonprofit group has unveiled an interactive database of composers—complete with digital samples of their work—geared towards independent producers in search of fresh musical talent.

Tentatively called Composer Contact!, the database allows users to browse via a touch-screen interface similar to that of an automated teller machine. At the moment, users have to show up in person at Harvestworks' SoHo offices, but once certain technical and legal hurdles are cleared, the organization hopes to launch the system on-line.

According to Carol Parkinson, Harvestworks' co-director, Composer Contact! grew out of a long-standing desire to bridge the gap between filmmakers and composers. "We heard from the composers, 'Gee, it's really tough to break into the industry'," she explains. "And the industry said, 'We really try to get composers who have done work for other filmmakers so that we know what they do.' So the issue became how do we break into that industry, because it was one that was based so much on referrals."

Harvestworks began a series of meetings with Tracy Williams, director of Meet the Composer, a nonprofit musicians' support organization that was similarly interested in establishing a composers database for filmmakers, choreographers, and multimedia artists to draw upon. Meet the Composer agreed to fund the development of a prototype with a $15,000 grant, and Composer Contact! was born.

To design the system, Harvestworks recruited Barry Greenhut, a Stanford-educated programmer engaged in the development of interactive media projects with the Manhattan-based Spin Cycle Post company. Adding to Greenhut's enthusiasm was the



An opening window of Composer Contact!, which aims to partner up filmmakers and composers.
Courtesy Harvestworks

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fact that he himself is an aspiring film composer.

"It's a dream come true that it would exist," Greenhut says. "I knew people in Hollywood, I knew publishers, I knew people at record companies, I knew people at studios, and I still couldn't break in."

Greenhut began by designing a questionnaire for composers that asks for autobiographical information, plus specifics on each piece of music submitted. This data, together with the artist's photo and a three-minute sample of music—which can be divided among as many as five separate works—are entered into the database.

Using the interface, an interested producer can choose from selections organized according to musical genre (jazz, classical, popular, and ambient "out there" music are a few examples), specific titles, composers' names, or performance venues. After viewing the information on-screen and listening to the music samples, the producer can press a button and receive a print-out of contact information for the desired composers. Currently, there are about 20 composers on the system, all of whom are Harvestworks members. By June, Parkinson anticipates the number to grow to about 50.

To use the system, a producer has to be a Harvestworks member, which costs $40 per year. The group then charges $10 for the first composer's name and $5 for each subsequent name. If a commission results, Harvestworks may decide to charge composers a finders' fee.

Harvestworks hopes to have a second prototype and public launch ready by next summer. However, both Parkinson and Greenhut are already looking beyond that to ways Composer Contact! can reach an even greater pool of users. The World Wide Web is one way. (The hold-up on a Web site has been the issue of copyright protection. According to Parkinson and Greenhut, the group has been working with a lawyer to devise an agreement for copyright holders to license works solely for on-line use.) Also, Greenhut says he envisions packaging the database as a multi-disk system, in which the core program is offered as a CD-ROM, and the database, which can be periodically updated, is distributed on floppy disks.

Most of the composers now in the system are based in New York City, but Parkinson envisions producing regional or nationwide databases if Harvestworks can find the right partners. Kiosks placed in the offices of film societies in major cities are one option, she says. Linking with a commercial software developer is another.

"We're always looking for new partnerships," she says. "There's all sorts of new media startup companies, so we're looking at possibly licensing [Composer Contact!]. It does cross over to that new media exploration, the creation of software."

Harvestworks, 596 Broadway, Ste. 602, New York, NY 10012; (212) 431-1130; fax: 431-8473; harvestW@panix.com; WWW: http://www.avsi.com/harvestworks/

STEVE JANAS

Steve Janas is a freelance writer and editor based in New Jersey.

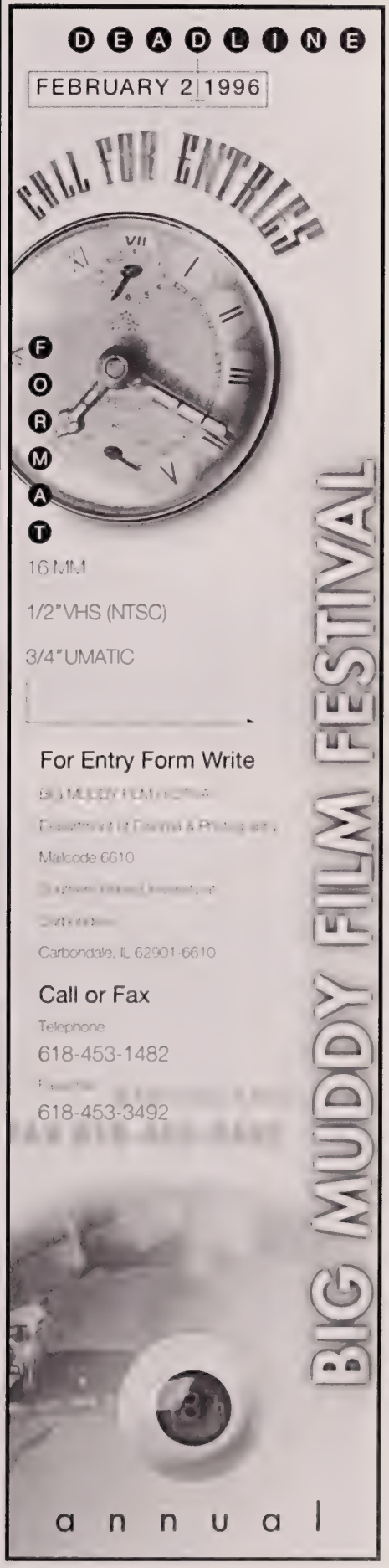
Tech Heads and Artists Unite at SIGGRAPH '95

THIS YEAR LOS ANGELES PLAYED HOST TO THE 22nd annual conference of ACM SIGGRAPH (Association for Computing Machinery Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics), held August 6–11. Of the 40,000 people who attend SIGGRAPH, increasing numbers are coming from the film world—both the noncommercial sector and the Hollywood studios. I ran into a filmmaker from Atlanta, an ex-teacher who now works for Microsoft, artist/engineers from the Human Interface Lab (a virtual reality lab) at the University of Washington, and video art curators from the Museum of Modern Art and Long Beach Museum of Art. Worlds are truly converging.

The media hype surrounding SIGGRAPH focused on the marriages of Hollywood and Silicon Valley that are resulting in new multimedia companies. On the high profile end there's DreamWorks SKG (the Steven Spielberg dreamteam linked with Microsoft), Digital Domain (founded by screenwriter/director James Cameron and ex-IBM folks), and the divisions being created by entertainment giants such as Disney Interactive and Fox Animation. But at all levels, creative artists, especially animators and multimedia artists, were being wined and dined by producers from Hollywood hungrily vying for new talent.

Out of the hype at SIGGRAPH a strong message emerged: there is a desperate need for creative people who can work in this new convergence zone. This should be good news for independent mediamakers interested in retooling their skills for digital multimedia and willing

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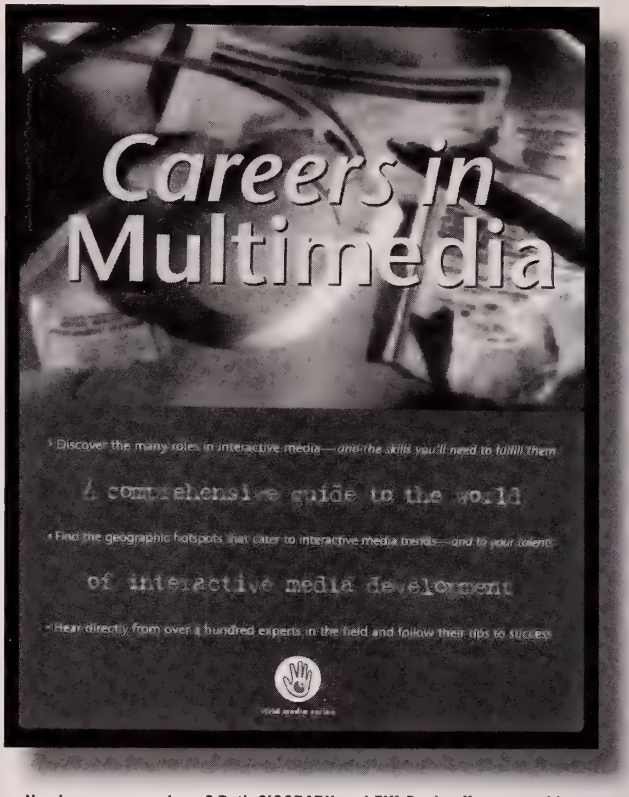
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to work as part of a team.

In his keynote address, Apple Computer founder Steve Jobs put the computer graphics industry in historical perspective, acknowledging the influential legacy of filmmaking. "In the same way films from the late 19th century, such as those by the Lumière brothers, are considered cinematic landmarks," said Jobs, "today's features that employ CGI (computer graphics imaging) techniques are probably going down in history as entertainment industry turning points."

Jobs's remarks linking CGI to traditional filmmaking were echoed in the Educator's Program by Jeff Light of Industrial Light & Magic (ILM). Light studied and taught filmmaking at Ohio State University before joining ILM in 1990. His filmmaking and fine arts background serves him well in his current job as computer graphics supervisor. It provides him with a firm grounding when making creative decisions, he testified, and enables him to think like a project's director and communicate in the language of filmmaking. "I've seen people come here with great computer skills who get trapped when it comes to making aesthetic decisions," he said. "They seem to run out of steam."

The lesson Light had to offer: You can train an artist to use the tools of a computer much more easily than you can train a computer programmer to be an artist. His advice to independent mediamakers was to learn media software programs (such as computer animation) and nonlinear digital video editing, and be able to talk to computer programmers intelligently in order to maintain creative control. Light acknowledged the value of drawing on the history and aesthetics of experimental mediamaking. "People out there in the independent media community might be surprised that, even at the highest levels of traditional Hollywood filmmaking, there is the same need for ingenuity and creativity as there is in the media arts field."



Need a career roadmap? Both SIGGRAPH and Ziff-Davis offer new guides to new media.

More crossover artists appeared on the panel "Interactive Multimedia: A New Creative Frontier or Just a New Commodity?" Amanda Goodenough, Rodney Greenblatt, Mikki Halpin, George Legrady, and Erik Loyer all came from traditional arts backgrounds in theater, filmmaking, cartooning, or sculpture and are now producing CD-ROMs for Voyager and Inscape. All emphasized that they are artists first, and that by learning the computer tools of interactive media, they are able to explore new forms of creativity that suit their aesthetics and ideas.

"There is a tremendous appetite for artists now in the new media industry," said Michael Nash, president of Inscape, a hot CD-ROM production company that he founded in 1994 with backing from Warner Bros. and HBO. "Experienced artists with the right skill set have a lot of leverage. Artists like Jim Ludtke, who first produced a CD-ROM for The Residents, can now pick and choose projects." Nash is also seeing "traditional" video artists, such as Janice Tanaka, teach themselves how to create CD-ROMs and find partners who can raise money and launch their work.

Nash himself was formerly in the nonprof-

it media arts field, working as video art curator at the Long Beach Museum of Art. He now believes the nonprofit world's days are numbered and advocates the jump to the private sector as the best hope for artists wanting to explore new media. Nash also promotes the idea that artists with the right set of skills—i.e., media production and computer expertise—can actually impact how these new technologies will develop.

Those who agree will find a helpful resource in ACM SIGGRAPH's *Computer Graphics Career Handbook* [SIGGRAPH, 1991; 2nd ed. due this spring; (212) 626-0500], which lists careers in computer graphics by categories and includes career profiles of people working in CGI, tips on how to find a job, and a roster of colleges and universities that teach computer graphics. Practical advice is sprinkled throughout the book. Kevin Bjorke, a technical director for animation at R/Greenberg Associates, counsels students of computer graphics film "to focus their study not on algorithms, but on their own creativity....Computer graphics is quickly blending into the mainstream of film/videomaking, and thus it's better to understand editing than enumeration, and probably better to read *Moby Dick*...than *A Survey of Multidimensional Data Projection Methods*. Technology changes rapidly; people and meaning do not."

Another great resource book is *Careers in Multimedia* by vivid studios, [Ziff-Davis Press, 1995; (800) 688-0448]. It gives the big picture, covering all the different platforms of multimedia, the types of projects being produced, the industries now producing multimedia, the types of jobs available, and even how to find a job. There are great quotes scattered throughout that underscore the continuing need for creativity, media production knowledge, and life skills. Karen Burch, producer at Synapse Technologies, says, "This industry is calling people with very eclectic backgrounds. It doesn't put you at a disadvantage if you've done one thing all of your life or if you're just fresh out of school and you studied fine art... I look for people who have had lots of different kinds of experiences, because that says to me they weren't afraid to change courses."

ROBIN REIDY OPPENHEIMER

Robin Reidy Oppenheimer is a consultant working in the converging areas of art, education, and technology. She is special projects director at 911 Media Arts Center in Seattle, and the former director of 911 and IMAGE Film/Video Center in Atlanta.

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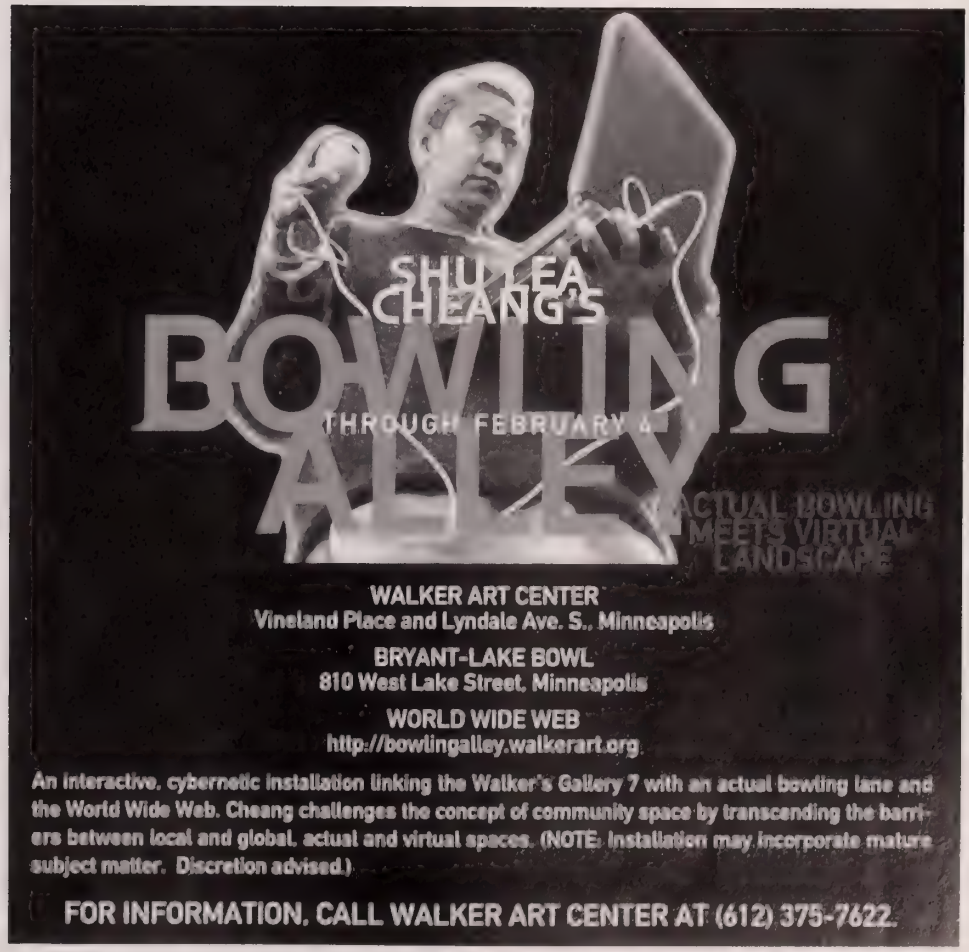
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Field Reports

Toronto Turns 20

The Toronto International Film Festival

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

AS THE AIRPORT SHUTTLE BUS HEADS TOWARDS the lakefront city of Toronto, bristling in the distance with spiky postmodern skyscrapers, a radio deejay incants a list of celebrity names: Sting, Mia Farrow, Diane Keaton, Quentin Tarantino. "The stars are coming out tonight," booms the deejay, who then suggests places to stand to catch a glimpse of the glitterati sweeping into town for the opening night gala of the Toronto International Film Festival.

He also treats hearty partiers to the news that the downtown bars are staying open late that week (September 7-16)—a clear sign of how Toronto merchants open their arms to this festival, now 20 years old and a major cultural event and cash cow for the city. The festival brings in $30 million (Canadian) each year to the province, including $7.4 million in tourism, according to a 1993 Decima research study. This cash infusion, however, has not stopped the Canadian government from taking a page from the ledger of U.S. conservative politics, which ignores the long-term financial (to say nothing of nonmaterial) benefits of supporting the arts. In 1995, the Toronto International Film Festival Group, which runs the $4.6 million festival, among other programs, had to make do with $223,260 less from the federal and provincial governments. "It's like a success story where suddenly the brakes are being applied, which is sad," festival director Piers Handling told *Variety*.

Despite the cutbacks, festival organizers presented a full-scale event this year, with 298 films in all, including 72 shorts and more than 150 features making their world or North American premieres.

The Toronto International Film Festival used to be called the Festival of Festivals, and it's easy to see why. This massive event is more like a bundle of diverse festivals rolled into one. (Twenty years ago, it had a different meaning, being created as a showcase for the best films from the spring and summer fests.) At the high-gloss end, as the deejay indicated, there are stars and preeminent directors aplenty for paparazzi and fans. This year's galas and special presentations included films by Gus Van Sant (*To Die For*), Diane Keaton (*Unstrung Heroes*), Sean Penn (*The Crossing Guard*), Woody Allen (*Mighty Aphrodite*), Carl Franklin (*Devil in a Blue Dress*), Darrell James Roodt (*Cry, the Beloved Country*), and the *Four Rooms* quartet, Allison Anders, Alexandre Rockwell, Robert Rodriguez, and Quentin Tarantino.

For more serious cineastes, the place was awash in world cinema that's hard to catch outside of the festival circuit. Those going for broke could easily pack a 10-day schedule with films by top notch directors whose works too rarely reach these shores—Wong Kar-wai (*Fallen Angels*), Theo Angelopoulos (*Ulysses' Gaze*), Michelangelo Antonioni (*Beyond the Clouds*), Michael Verhoeven (*My Mother's Courage*), Jacques Rivette (*Haut bas fragile*), Lars von Trier (*The Kingdom*), Nicolas Roeg (*Two Deaths*), Mathieu Kassovitz (*La haine*), and many more. These titles were mostly clustered in the Contemporary World Cinema Programme, the festival's oldest and largest section, with 65 films from 20 countries this year. But on top of this, the festival also offered substantial sidebars of world cinema, including Asian Horizons, Latin American Panorama, Planet Africa, Hungarian Rhapsodies, and Perspective Canada.

If that's not enough to overwhelm the most dedicated and caffeinated cinephile, there was also the festival's "official program of discovery": First Cinema, a sidebar initiated in 1991 that is devoted to feature debuts. Of the 30 films selected this year, almost half were by U.S. independents. Some were familiar from the 1995 festival circuit (Jennifer Montgomery's *Art for Teachers of Children*, Theodore Thomas' *Frank and Ollie*, James Mangold's *Heavy*), but many others were North American premieres (Hal Salwen's *Denise Calls Up*, Daphna Kastner's *French Exit*, John Sullivan's *sleepover*, Monique Gardenberg's *Janipapo*, and Stacy Title's *Last Supper*, among others).

"I'm feeling like a minnow," says Title. "This is such a huge festival with huge movies, with huge powerhouses behind them. You see a



A threatened rape turns into a short spell of tenderness between *Welcome to the Dollhouse*'s class bully and suffering nerd. "Some sort of alchemy happens," says director Todd Solondz (pictured). "It turns into a poetic moment."

Courtesy Sony Pictures Classics

movie like *Devil in a Blue Dress* or *Unstrung Heroes* or even *Crossing Guard*, and there's an entourage attached to it and just a sort of life force that goes towards the marketing of it at this festival."

IT'S TRUE THE PUBLICITY MACHINES STOKING THE launch of studio films are sizable operations here (Columbia Pictures, for instance, not only held a press conference for *To Die For*, they also took over a suite and seven rooms at the Four Seasons hotel for print and TV press interviews).

But it's also true that Toronto's reputation as a festival loved by filmmakers owes to the fact that smaller films have plenty of opportunities for accomplishing a variety of business and marketing objectives. With no official competition to hog the limelight, Toronto does have a more egalitarian feel than Berlin, Cannes, and Sundance. Big and little films coexist without quite so flagrant a pecking order; each finds its niche and its viewers—and there are plenty to go around. Audiences number around 200,000, with approximately 1,000 registered producers, distributors, programmers, and agents.

Though without an official market, Toronto has become a required stop on the buyers' circuit. About 300 buyers and sellers were on hand this year, including top staff from Miramax, October, Samuel Goldwyn, and Fine Line Features, plus dozens of TV buyers, art house and museum programmers, and festival directors from around the world.

Thus the name of the game for the majority of U.S. independents at Toronto is sales. John Sullivan, the 26-year-old director of *sleepover*, typified this quest, announcing during his film's Q&A and at every other opportunity that "all rights are available." ("I'm totally, totally out of money," he would later add less publicly.) Sullivan says he met with "the usual suspects" about distribution of his micro-budget feature, the story of a bullying male friendship and a night's partying gone awry. (While Sullivan did not come away from Toronto with a deal for domestic distribution, he did make contact there with reps from the Australian/New Zealand theatrical market and is currently negotiating a sale.)

In terms of the visibility *sleepover* received in the First Cinema section, Sullivan was completely satisfied. "There's the larger festival that's going on—famous people and gala premieres—but in terms of the First Cinema and Contemporary World Cinema groupings, the people that are working within that world, making decisions and getting films discovered, are all here looking at those films. So it's almost like two festivals are going on," says Sullivan. "I don't feel left out at all. I feel it's going on, and we're going on, and both worlds are completely valid."

First Cinema director Stacy Title had the luxury of waltzing into Toronto arm-in-arm with a distributor, Sony Picture Classics, which had acquired worldwide rights to *The Last Supper* a few months earlier. "This was a 'what do we have?' festival," says the director of her black comedy about a group of liberal grad students in Iowa who poison an assortment of hate-mongers they invite to their Sunday night dinners. Because of its generally packed houses and diverse audiences, Toronto is widely considered one of the best places to gauge public reaction to a film. (There's many a tale about distributors reconsidering a film they once shunned after seeing it in Toronto with one of these crowds.) Since *The Last Supper*'s launch date isn't until March, their mission at Toronto was "subtle," Title explains. "What we wanted to do is see what audiences thought of it: Did we get it right? We recut the third reel a little bit. Because we never had a real audience, we never tested or anything, we thought this would be a great place to present it to the public and see if they liked it."

Like most of the festival's films, *Last Supper* had two public screenings—both packed, "which is so important for a comedy," says Title. "It did really well; I was so happy. And they were very different audiences. Friday was boisterous, loud; they laughed more at the jokes. But the transition to the dark sections was harder for them. Yesterday's audience was taking it much more seriously, and they stayed with it in a much more intense way. It was fascinating for me to watch." The next step, says Title, was for Sony to do follow-up calls to film professionals who were in the audience before fine-tuning strategies for its spring release.

Perception is everything, at times, and Toronto is widely perceived to hold the power to launch a hit (and careers), or at least to get the momentum rolling. Its track-record is one the film industry takes seriously: *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Smithereens*, *The Unbelievable Truth*, *Blood Simple*, *Drugstore Cowboy*, *Roger & Me*, *Reservoir Dogs*, and *Crumb* are just a few of the titles that took off at Toronto. Of course, predictions there are not infallible. *Priest*, the hit of the 1994 festival, promptly fizzled at the box office despite critical raves, and *To Die For* seems headed down the same path, though this mordant black comedy was one of the festival's most enthusiastically embraced films.

Another festival favorite—which has yet to live or die at the box office—is *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, a low-budget labor of love by Todd Solondz that had its world premiere at Toronto. "No serious player in this business would have financed a movie about this little girl," says Solondz, who penned the script about an 11-year-old New Jersey girl going through the painfully grim humiliations of adolescence. But once the buzz started, all the industry players wanted a look.

"My primary objective is to get domestic theatrical in motion," the director quietly stated the day he arrived in Toronto, and lo, within a few weeks, Sony Pictures Classics had snapped it up, beating out October and Miramax. They currently plan an April release. (Sony also picked up *Celluloid Closet*, Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman's long-awaited documentary about gays and lesbians in Hollywood films.)

But the 36-year-old director had already lived through one brush with "overnight success" and wasn't about to let the deal warp his thinking. "This script was written just when I was finishing my first movie, really to redeem myself from the horror of that experience," Solondz confesses, referring to his first feature, *Fear, Anxiety, and Depression*, released by Samuel Goldwyn six years ago. This was a project that, on the surface, looked like every film student's dream: Solondz's popular NYU short was screened in Los Angeles and caught the attention of Scott Rudin, then president of 20th Century Fox, who offered him a three-picture writing deal. This was quickly followed by a three-picture deal with Columbia.

"The only thing I really liked about these deals was telling everyone I had them," Solondz quips. He squirms uncomfortably when talking about his first feature, produced by Propaganda Pictures. "Had I made the right choices, it could have been a good experience. I don't blame anyone; sometimes these things



One of the few documentaries in Toronto's line-up this year was *Synthetic Pleasures*, Iara Lee's look at the ways we try to control our world today—from nanotechnology to indoor skiing and surfing rinks to smart drugs, virtual reality, and cyber sex. It was also the best merchandized film, offering mouse pads (pictured), clothing, bags, plus a Web site (http://www.panix.com/liao/sp/).

Courtesy filmmakers

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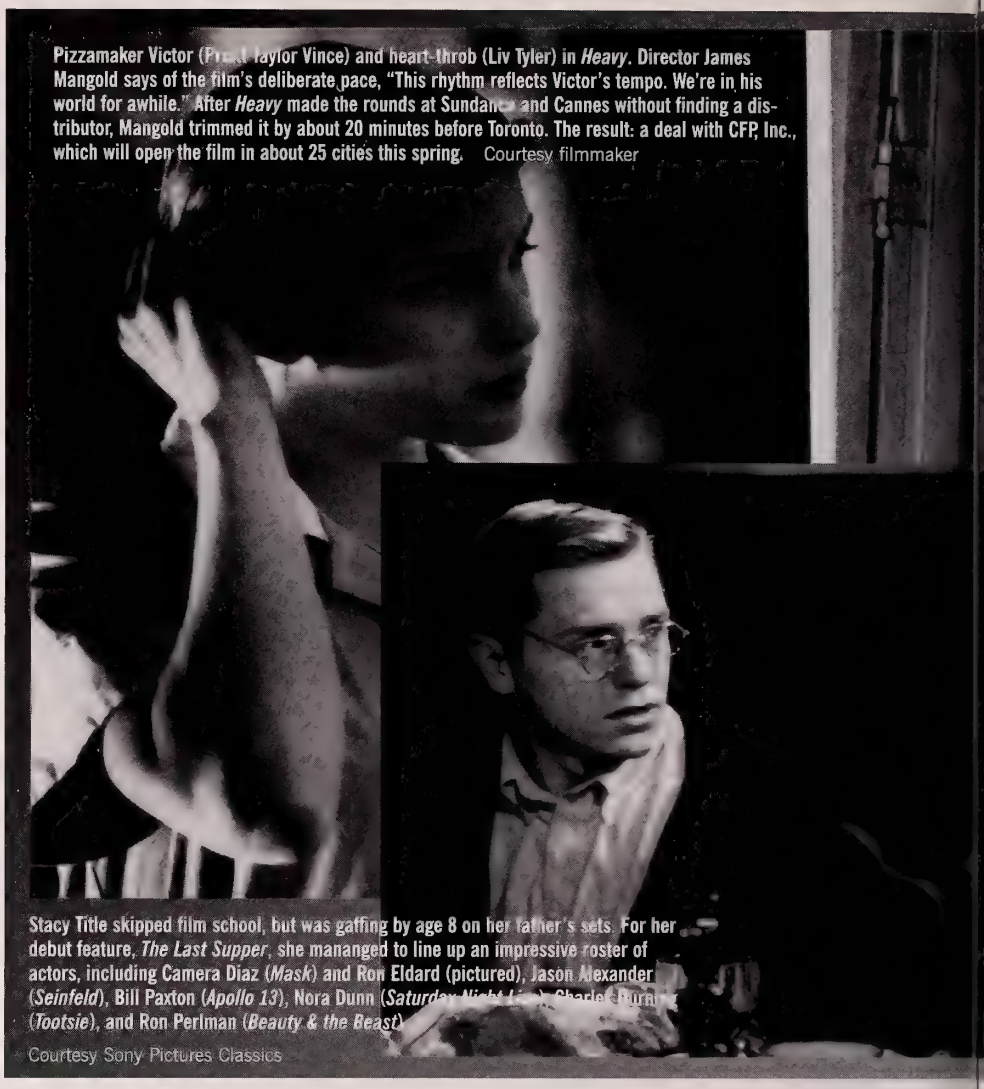
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Pizzamaker Victor (Pr[illegible] Taylor Vince) and heart-throb (Liv Tyler) in *Heavy*. Director James Mangold says of the film's deliberate pace, "This rhythm reflects Victor's tempo. We're in his world for awhile." After *Heavy* made the rounds at Sundance and Cannes without finding a distributor, Mangold trimmed it by about 20 minutes before Toronto. The result: a deal with CFP, Inc., which will open the film in about 25 cities this spring. Courtesy filmmaker

Stacy Title skipped film school, but was gaffing by age 8 on her father's sets. For her debut feature, *The Last Supper*, she mananged to line up an impressive roster of actors, including Camera Diaz (*Mask*) and Ron Eldard (pictured), Jason Alexander (*Seinfeld*), Bill Paxton (*Apollo 13*), Nora Dunn (*Saturday Night Live*), Charles Durning (*Tootsie*), and Ron Perlman (*Beauty & the Beast*).

Courtesy Sony Pictures Classics

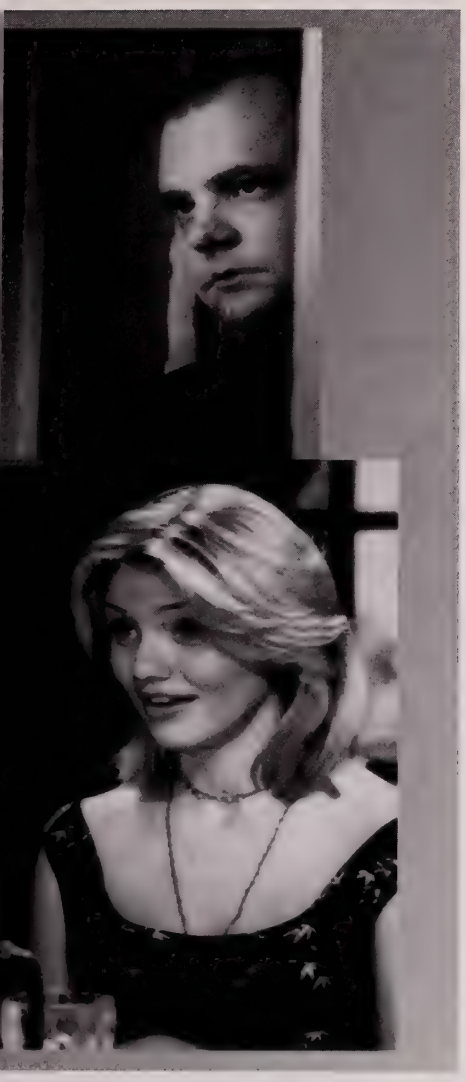
just happen. Sometimes you can be a good director and somehow every choice you make is the wrong one," he says. "I felt better; [*Dollhouse*] made me feel I have something to share with other people, something to communicate"—about kids' ability to endure and to "exhume tenderness from this horrible cruel world. That's why [the main character, Dawn Weiner] doesn't slit her wrists." He adds, "It's a bleak picture, but it's funny at the same time."

Six years older and wiser, with a long stint outside the dream-machine industry teaching English to Russian immigrants, Solondz now says to film-school greenhorns, "My advice is to write a script you love. If it's a script that other people love and it's the right people, that's a wonderful situation to be in."

Dollhouse does seem close to the director's heart, even though its lead is a girl. "I identified with many of my characters," admits Solondz, whose small physique and substantial glasses lead one to suspect a hidden history of geekhood that allies him with the main character, as well as with her brother, a young Bill Gates look-alike who plays clarinet in his garage band.

THOUGH IT'S A TRUISM TO "WRITE ABOUT what you know," many of the strongest films—and other films' strongest moments—seem the result of some autobiographical touchstone. The abusive power dynamic between friends in *sleepover*, for instance, was based on a charming trouble-maker Sullivan knew growing up. "It's a big issue now, with teen-pack mentality," says Sullivan. "The hierarchy is run by the strongest in teen society, especially with fathers absent. At 17, I didn't know how to stand up to bullies or tyranny."

But it's not only first films that benefit from an autobiographical link. Even *To Die For* was enriched by Van Sant's personal ties to elements in the story, though on the surface it seems far removed from the director's experience. *To Die For* tells the story of a dim but ambitious weatherwoman (Nicole Kidman) who seduces some high school students into bumping off her husband (Matt Dillon) when he becomes inconvenient to her career. Written by Buck Henry from a novel by Joyce Maynard, which in turn draws from the real-life trial of a school teacher in New Hampshire, the story is



thrice removed from the Oregonian director. But Van Sant was attracted to the project because of similarities he saw between Darien, Connnecticut, where he spent 10 years of his youth, and the New Hampshire setting of *To Die For.* Both are former railroad towns on the New England coast with a similar class structure—lower-class fishermen; middle-class Italians, who first arrived in the 1800s to build the railroads; and upper-class vacationers (now commuters). "Everyone went to school together and we all became close friends," Van Sant recalls, "yet there was always this humorously designed class structure." The pride and prejudice of class is fully played out in Van Sant's rendering of the script; interestingly, it's the white-trash high schoolers who come off as the most sympathetic and least cartoonish. Van Sant agrees: "The kids were cast that way."

There's also a hidden autobiographical link in *Heavy*, an accomplished first feature by James Mangold (who's now shooting a cop story set in New Jersey, under Miramax's wing). Set in upstate New York, where the 30-year-old director grew up, this restrained film follows an overweight, painfully shy pizza-maker through a personal tragedy and a first crush. "I was driven to make a movie about someone who was very big, but very unseen," Mangold explains. "Fat is a kind of ugliness that we're blamed for. It's a dramatically potent place to be."

And it's an experience the director admits knowing firsthand. "There was a period after I was under contract at Disney, when I was 21, a period after things kind of fell apart for a very early chance at having a very momentous career," Mangold recalls. "I gained a lot of weight and very much kept to myself. I suddenly was confronted with how visible I could be when this deal was made, and I had a big agent and was signed with the hottest studio—then how suddenly I could be completely invisible." He goes on, "There's just this feeling of transparency you have. When people do see you, they essentially see you as a target."

Like Solondz, Mangold's stint with the studio system left him with a more sober view of the value of being "discovered" by Hollywood fresh out of school. "It's a myth, this whole idea that through a short film you can get a dream career out of Hollywood," he cautions. "You really have to come in stronger, with more momentum. And that entails—at least in the current set-up—making an independent feature that makes an impression. Because they need to treat you with some respect. Essentially, if you've made a short film, they're giving you a monumental break, and they feel like they own you."

Van Sant is a director who came to the studios more slowly, and on his own terms. By the time he made his first studio project, he already had *Mala Noche* ($20,000), *Drugstore Cowboy* ($4 million), and *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* ($7.5 million) under his belt. So in his experience, the difference between making a studio film, like the $15 million *To Die For*, and shooting independently is negligible, except for the marketing clout a studio can muster.

"I always throw it to a committee anyway," he says. "So far it hasn't been different from when it's a low-budget film I'm showing to my friends in Oregon. It's been actually harsher, because they're your friends. Here you are making a film with money you've saved for two years, and your friends, who are supposed to be sympathetic, are gossiping about your movie behind your back and telling each other, 'It doesn't work.' That's hard. The same thing happens when you've worked for a year-and-a-half—and got paid for it, however—at a small studio."

But somehow, like the Everready bunny, these directors have found a way to keep going and going. It's a calling they've gotta really love.

Patricia Thomson is editor of The Independent.

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Field Reports

Write'em, Cowboy

Austin Heart of Film Festival and Screenwriters' Conference

BY JAMES SHELTON



IN OCTOBER 1994, MIKHAILA "MAX" ADAMS attended the Austin Heart of Film Festival and Screenwriters' Conference with the same aspiration as so many others: to secure a deal. A former bartender and secretary, Adams managed to "do lunch" with producer David Valdes (*A Perfect World*, *In the Line of Fire*, and *Unforgiven*). Later while at a party, she was introduced to Barry Josephson, president of production for Columbia Pictures. Valdes and Josephson read Adams' script en route to Los Angeles and informed her upon their arrival home that she now had an agent and a producer.

Excess Baggage is presently being rewritten by Adams, who has since moved from Utah to Los Angeles. The film, produced by Valdes, began shooting in November with star Alicia Silverstone.

Adams's Cinderella story became the key inspiration for more than 300 participants at the second annual festival and conference, held from October 5 to 8. According to festival directors Barbara Morgan and Marsha Milam, the event is designed to fill a niche in the American film industry. "Our focus remains the contribution of the screenwriter to filmmaking...an integral element in the creative process that we both celebrate and examine," the directors explained in their welcoming letter to festival attendees. "Our aim is to bring acknowledged masters of the craft of writing, along with a variety of entertainment professionals, together with the emerging screenwriting talent that continually reenergizes the film and television industry."

In a swirl of panel discussions, seminars, "how-to" craft sessions, case studies, and one-on-one mentor programs, 100 industry professionals along with more than 300 registrants converged on Austin's historic Driskill Hotel to share their expertise. But the imparting of knowledge came in a greater variety of forms, the most vital being the networking parties, which cultivated an informal atmosphere of mutual exchange between registrants and professionals.

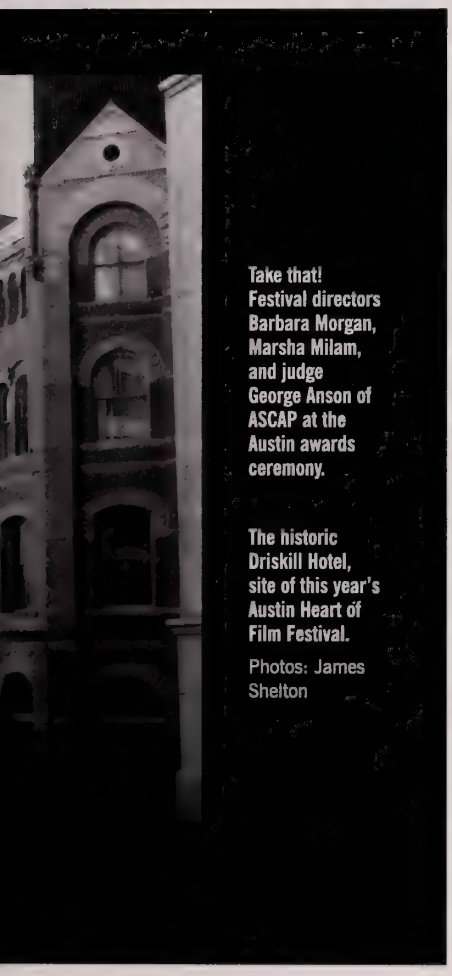
Tara Veneruso, who won a Silver Award at the Houston International Film Festival for her music documentary *Janis Joplin Slept Here*, felt the festival "connected screenwriters and filmmakers with real professionals. These weren't professors from some college, they make their careers in film, and it was magic."

Many of these professionals suggested that the key to success is network-building in general and having access to a community of like-minded individuals. "Sometimes you find yourself getting bogged down and drifting," said Al Reinert (*Apollo 13*), "and you need feedback in order to get grounded again."

Independent writer/director Steve Bilich (*Ruta Wakenings*) said, "There are a lot of people who just don't want to live in Hollywood, but they want to make movies. Connect with people in your area who have the same common goals, and you can see passions increasing. Not to mention, these people can be a foundation for actually getting your film made."

Writers got down to brass tacks during the various craft sessions that explored screen-

writing on several different levels, from basic story structure and text formatting to the complexity of pacing in action and mystery films. There were a couple of case study sessions that involved the creators of two television series looking at their work: Fox's alternative animated hit *The Tick* by Ben Edlund and the Emmy-nominated dramatic series *Sweet Justice* by John Romano. Writer/producer Anne Flett-Giordano and actress Peri Gilpin (Roz) also discussed the Emmy-winning episode of *Frasier* titled "An Affair to Forget."



Take that! Festival directors Barbara Morgan, Marsha Milam, and judge George Anson of ASCAP at the Austin awards ceremony.

The historic Driskill Hotel, site of this year's Austin Heart of Film Festival.

Photos: James Shelton

Other panels were equally weighted toward commercial Hollywood scripts. Shane Black (*Lethal Weapon*, *The Last Action Hero*), for instance, explained the importance of placing a "Wham-O" in action scripts every 10 pages—a "Wham-O" being anything that causes a spike in the emotions of a viewer and keeps them riveted to the screen.

Although most of the panelists were Hollywood writers, they managed to discuss and even promote films made outside the mainstream.

"Independent filmmaking is something special," said writer/director/actor Barry Primus (*Mistress*, *Final Stage*, and television's *Tribeca* and *Nine to Five*). Primus avowed a belief in following a specific vision, even with the knowledge that the project will never be financed through the mainstream. There is "a certain glamour in being an outlaw" in filmmaking, he said, adding that the point is nonetheless to ensure that your project gets made.

"Don't try to make a Hollywood movie," Primus advised. "Make something that hasn't been done before, something odd or strange, yet expressly in your own voice."

"Ideas are the commodity," said 26-year-old writer Christopher McQuarrie (*The Usual Suspects*). "L.A. is a vacuum of ideas right now, and all you need to do is be able to tell an original story."

Writer/director Frank Pierson (*Cool Hand Luke*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, and *Presumed Innocent*) recommended searching today's headlines for real-life people and fictionalizing to pursue a larger moral/ethical truth than is present in the facts. "Look for those events that are a metaphor for life," Pierson suggested. Then begin "paring those events down" into a tangible, character-driven storyline. Cable is becoming a fast-growing home for independent works, but they are specifically looking for films that fit the times, he added.

Similar words of encouragement were heard during the other panels that dealt more broadly with producing a film independently.

Significantly, the speakers came from diverse backgrounds; there was a former security guard (McQuarrie, who wrote *The Usual Suspects*), a comic book writer/artist (Ben Edlund), novelist Sarah Bird (*Don't Tell Her It's Me*), and former journalists Bill Wittligg (*Legends of the Fall*) and Robin Swicord (*Little Women*). What they had in common was their success in the industry. The group's knowledge and stories of personal struggle inspired all attendees.

M. Cevin Cathell, associate producer of *The Return of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Cadillac Ranch*, told participants to "get creative" when attempting to produce a film. "Going to parties and talking to the right people is so important," she said. "You would be surprised who might partially finance, donate services, or physically work on a project with you. I met a great director of photography who was able to secure certain services—film stock, processing, and equipment—at a substantial savings by promising to use those same compa-

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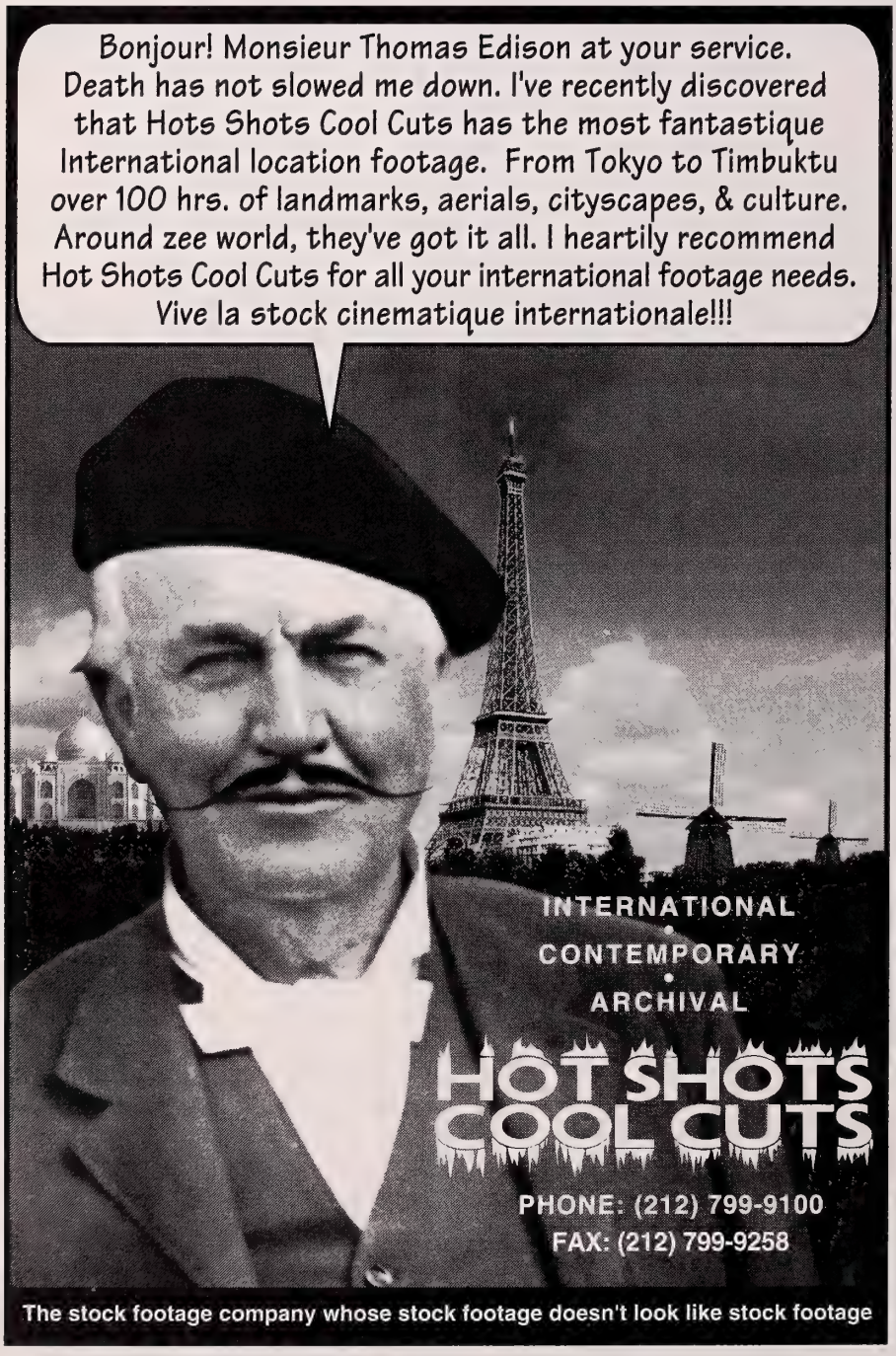
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nies on his next film," Cathell added.

Writer/director Whit Stillman (*Metropolitan* and *Barcelona*) emphasized to aspiring filmmakers the importance of setting up a corporation, which limits personal liability. According to Stillman, the odds are 500-to-one that a film with a budget of $25,000 will return a profit. "If you are unsure about how to go about [incorporating], just borrow documents from an existing business and substitute the names with those involved in your enterprise," Stillman said. He also examined the special Screen Actors Guild (SAG) provisions for low-budget experimental films.

Primus also recommended that filmmakers shoot five or six scenes on video first. This run-through can be used to fine-tune dialogue and action, and can also serve as a valuable "calling card" to possible investors interested in financing your project.

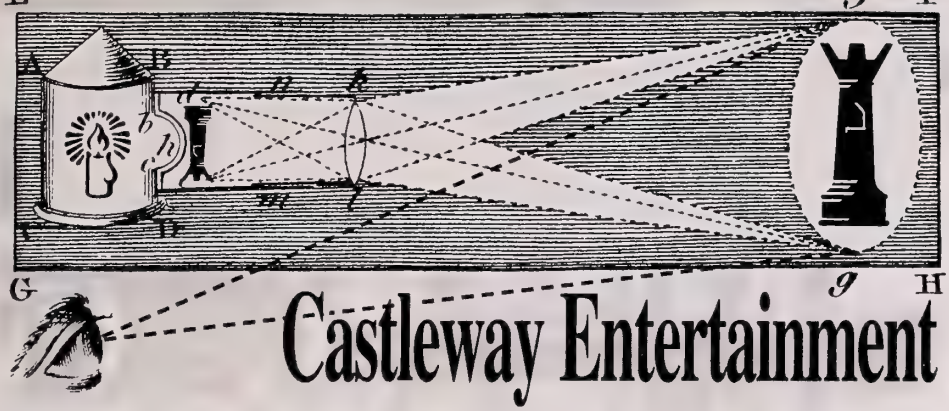
Though only two years old, the conference has already tapped a deep well of aspiring screenwriters. Over 1,600 screenplays were received in this year's competition. The winners were divided into three categories: Children and Family (*White Water* by Jonathan Eig), Adult (*Double Time* by Polly Keny McAllister) and Student Short (Bing Yao's *Twinkle Twinkle*). Winners of the Children and Adult categories each received $3,000 cash awards, while the Student Short screenplay netted $750.

The festival also received 140 film entries for Best Short Film (Sean Gannon's *Radioman*), Best Guerilla Feature Film produced for less than $50,000 (*Seeking the Cafe Bob* by Jeff Stolhand), and Best Feature Film for more than $50,000 (*The Man with the Perfect Swing* by Michael Hovis). Each winner received a bronze award.

Appropriately, Mikhaila Adams's good fortune seems to have been perpetuated: festival staff confirmed that at least five screenplays from the competition were being optioned and are currently in negotiations.

For information on next year's festival and conference, contact: Barbara Morgan, Austin Heart of Film Festival & Screenwriters' Conference, 707 Rio Grande, Ste. 101, Austin, TX 78701; (800) 310-FEST; (512) 478-4795; fax: 478-6205.

James Shelton is an Austin-based writer and photographer and the president of TEX-CINEMA Productions.



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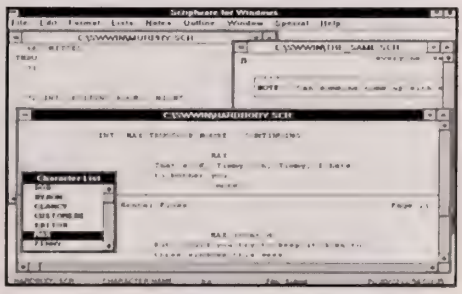
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Field Reports

On the Short Form

Four Distributors Take Stock of the Market for Shorts

BY MAX J. ALVAREZ

IN SPITE OF TREMENDOUS EXHIBITOR APATHY towards short films, thousands are produced in the United States every year by students and independents. Few if any of these ever see the light of a multiplex theater screen, though many will serve as filler programming at film festivals. Festivals, of course, tend not to pay for accepted submissions and in fact generally require registration fees from filmmakers. They also are designed to showcase feature-length films, a factor that prompted the establishment of prominent international festivals dedicated exclusively to the presentation of short films. Since the market for shorts exists primarily in television—and European television at that—some of the best entry points are the shorts festivals in Europe, most notably Clermont-Ferrand in France (February 2–10, 1996); Tampere in Finland (March 6–10); and Oberhausen in Germany (tentatively scheduled for April–May). In this country, Sundance reigns supreme [see story pg. 40], though few shorts are bought outright; most of the buyers and agents packing the short programs there are looking for talent to nurture, not acquisitions. Other prominent U.S. festivals for shorts are the Aspen Short Festival (February 22-25, 1996) and the New York Expo of Short Film & Video (November 1996).

Still, the market for shorts does not necessarily have to begin and end at the festival circuit. While both major and independent theatrical distributors avoid shorts like the plague, small boutique distributors and dedicated nonprofit organizations (such as Filmmakers Cooperative and Women Make Movies) take shorts very seriously.

The Independent spoke recently with several leading shorts distributors for views on the complex and undependable business of marketing short film productions. Most agreed that the shorts market has seen better days, yet there were ample indications that this predominantly television and nontheatrical-driven market was far from dormant. Opinions differed as to the intensity of interest from overseas TV markets, but the majority described the level of enthusiasm as significantly higher than the lukewarm reception generally accorded short films by U.S. broadcasters.

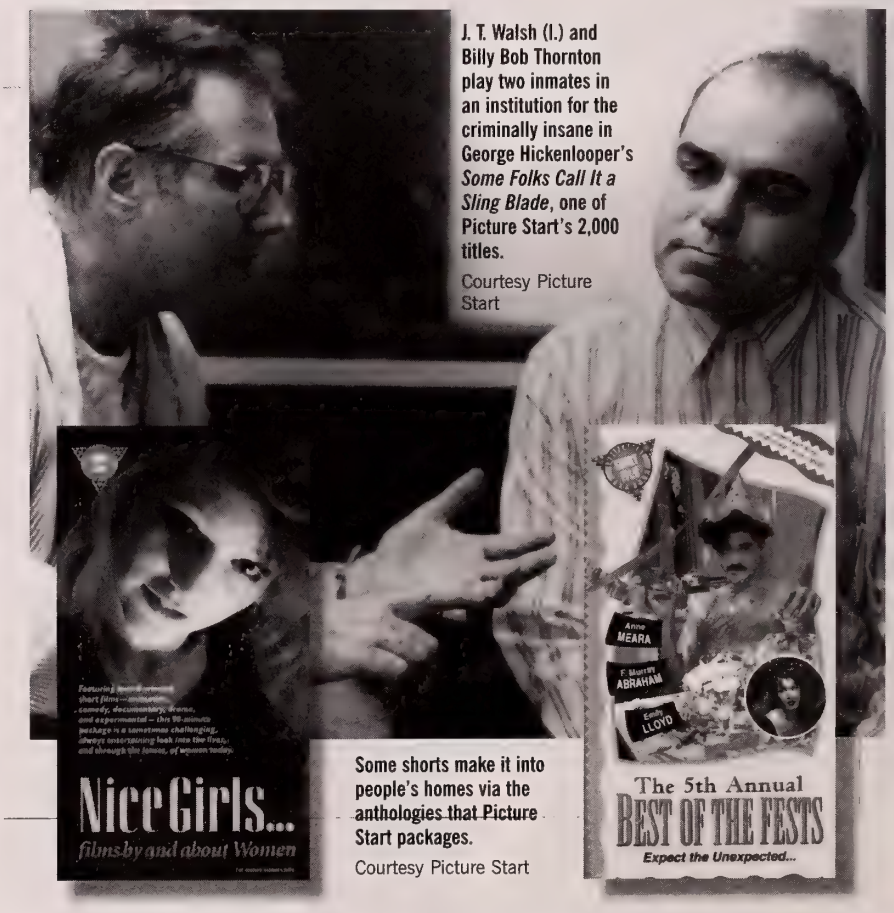
Picture Start

1727 W. Catalpa Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640; (312) 769-2489.

"I'm waiting for the market to surprise me, and every now and then it does," says Picture Start owner Jeffrey S. Hellyer, who has run the company since 1981.

Founded in 1979 by the late Ron Epple and six other film enthusiasts from the University of Illinois, Picture Start historically has acquired between 200 to 300 shorts a year. At present, however, Picture Start is putting the brakes on new acquisitions in order to concentrate on its backlog of 2,000 titles. "We've got a thousand submissions sitting here from the past eight months alone," Hellyer reports.

The Picture Start library encompasses a range of films in all genre categories: animation films by Sally Cruikshank, experimental classics by Maya Deren and Ed Emshwiller, quirky cinema verité shorts by Tony Buba,



J. T. Walsh (l.) and Billy Bob Thornton play two inmates in an institution for the criminally insane in George Hickenlooper's *Some Folks Call It a Sling Blade*, one of Picture Start's 2,000 titles.

Courtesy Picture Start

Some shorts make it into people's homes via the anthologies that Picture Start packages.

Courtesy Picture Start

satires by Ernie Fossellus, as well as dramas and political documentaries. The company is generally in a fragile financial state and has survived these past 16 years due to its volunteer staff having outside jobs.

"In all these years things have only altered slightly," Hellyer says. "Short films are just as second-class as ever." Hellyer reports a downward trend in licensing fees for shorts because television networks, realizing that independent filmmakers crave exposure, try to pay as little as possible. A broadcast offer of $100 per minute is considered a terrific (albeit uncommon) deal in the United States nowadays. "To be fair to the networks, short films come out of nowhere from unheard-of people and then disappear," says Hellyer. "They are not part of an ongoing series. People don't turn on their TV sets or go to video stores for 10-minute movies." This hasn't stopped Picture Start from offering 90-minute video collections, such as an annual *Best of the Fests* and *Nice Girls...films by and about Women* (with works by Emily Hubley, Ann Marie Fleming, Lidia Szajko, and eight other filmmakers).

Hellyer finds very little signs of life left in the theatrical market for short fiction works. Compilation programs of shorts that occasionally land bookings in art cinemas (e.g., those centered around animation or gay/lesbian themes, such as the International Tournée of Animation package or Strand Releasing's *Boys' Life*) are considered esoteric exceptions.

"I don't think Americans respect the short form, but in Europe people realize that it is an art form in and of itself," states Hellyer. Television in the overseas industrialized countries tends not to be locked into the standard 30- and 60-minute programming blocks and is more open to experimentation with films of various lengths. England and Canada are shorts enthusiasts; countries such as France, Germany, and Spain also pursue them at overseas film festivals. The language barrier has not presented much of a problem for Picture Start, since the overseas market is accustomed to the subtitling and dubbing of American programs.

In the States, the reception for the kinds of quirky shorts favored by Picture Start has been chillier. The television networks, for example, have not expanded their short subjects needs. "It's been 10 years since we've made a deal with *Saturday Night Live*, because they just don't take anything that isn't in-house anymore," says Hellyer. Picture Start generally submits a group of 20 shorts (usually those with conventional narratives) to a network as individual entries rather than as a package (unlike home video), because TV buyers prefer to assemble their own programs, and one poorly received film in a package could taint the remaining titles.

Hellyer praises the new independent movie channels for taking an interest in short films. Even so, he doubts they will be paying much money and predicts filmmakers will be utilizing these channels primarily for resumé exposure. While Edge TV will be taking a riskier approach by acquiring experimental shorts, Bravo and its Independent Film Channel offspring are searching for non-experimental narratives.

Picture Start is not currently accepting submissions. On a more positive note, the company is making its Avid postproduction editing system available to independent filmmakers without distribution strings attached and for what Hellyer asserts are "ungodly low rates."



Coe Film Associates, which specializes in family and children's programming, has picked up such work as Eliot Noyes's *Bad Dog* and Pooh Kaye's *The Painted Princess.* Courtesy Coe Films

Coe Film Associates, Inc.

65 E. 96th Street, New York, NY 10128; (212) 831-5355.

A forerunner in the selling of short films to television since 1970, Coe Film Associates is the largest U.S. distributor of shorts to the TV market and boasts a library of some 2,500 titles, including TV specials, series, and performance films. Founder Bernice Coe estimates that her company screens 50 to 75 direct submissions each week, most of which are rejected. The company specializes in family and children's programming and periodically releases dramatic stories and documentaries. Coe's suppliers include the American Film Institute, Anthology Film Archives, the Australian and New Zealand film commissions, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Although Coe concedes the market for short product is not as strong as it once was, her company has nonetheless managed to turn a profit. "The reason we make money is that we handle so many films, and the reason the filmmaker doesn't make much money is because he has just one film," says Coe.

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Coe cites narrative fiction shorts, particularly those produced in film schools as audition projects, as being the toughest to market to television. Nonfiction works, on the other hand, offer greater possibilities, and in extremely rare circumstances a dance performance film such as David Hahn's *In a Rehearsal Room* will be profitable for its filmmaker. Coe Film Associates enjoys relationships with cable giants Home Box Office and Discovery Channel and has sold packages of 50 to 100 shorts to such services as Nickelodeon. The distributor also has a representative assigned to handle sales to PBS and other specialty venues.

Coe routinely sends agents to various European film markets in search of international customers for short product. England has proven to be a viable market for Coe due to the Children's Channel, the BBC, and Channel Four, but in her experience, non-English-speaking countries are more apprehensive about English-language shorts unless the casts have recognizable names.

Coe Films Associates accepts direct submissions from filmmakers.

Cinema Guild

1697 Broadway, Suite 50G, New York, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522.

"Don't quit your day job. It's virtually unheard of for anyone to make a living from the income you'll be able to generate from an educational film or video program," warns Cinema Guild president Gary Crowdus.

Cinema Guild is celebrating its twentieth year as an independent distributor of documentary and how-to videos in the nontheatrical and home video markets. Cinema Guild occasionally handles features, but its focus is primarily on short productions. Each year the distributor acquires 30 to 40 documentary shorts and a maximum of six fiction shorts. Documentaries are easier for Cinema Guild to market if the film can be targeted to university courses (e.g., ethnic or media studies departments). Short films based on literary classics periodically find a warm reception in language arts and English Lit courses at some universities. In addition, says Crowdus, "We have a package of short fiction pieces we call *Short Stories*, a video anthology which has gone to libraries and public schools.

"As long as there's an academic community, it's a fairly stable market," he observes. While this market produces some nice royalty checks on occasion, Crowdus is quick to note that the revenue generated is seldom enough to support a filmmaker.

Like Coe, Crowdus has doubts about the market value of film school "calling card" shorts, especially in home video. "If you're lucky you might do the occasional TV sale. If they're very short—10 minutes or less—there is a market for what they call interstitial material."

Filmmakers may pitch Crowdus directly over the phone.

Pyramid Film & Video

Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406; (310) 828-7577.

The diminishing market and increased competition for fictional short product has prompted Pyramid to shift its focus to health-related acquisitions and productions, reports vice president Denise Adams. The company acquires 15 to 20 shorts a year and has a library of 500 titles, the majority of



Depth Charge **(below) is in Cinema Guild's *Short Stories* anthology, which has gone to libraries and public schools.**
Courtesy Cinema Guild

Lisa Krueger's *Best Offer*, a coming-of-age story about a girl who must sell her horse, is one of Cinema Guild's fiction shorts; the company acquires only about six per year.
Courtesy Cinema Guild



Pyramid picked up Joan Gratz's Oscar-winning *Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase.* Courtesy Pyramid Films

Bob Rogers's *Rainbow War*, one of the 15 to 20 shorts a year acquired by Pyramid. Courtesy Pyramid Films

which are 30 minutes and under.

Pyramid did distribute Joan Gratz's 1992 Oscar-winning short *Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase*, although this acquisition was largely an exception. Public libraries, once a dependable source of income for Pyramid's short product, have transformed themselves into mini-video stores with more conventional feature-length titles. "They don't buy anything unless it's under fifty dollars," laments Adams.

"The international market is suffering, too. They, more than America, have a pressure for low cost," Adams continues. She also echoes Coe's comments about narrative shorts encountering translation problems. Cable television, which purchased a high volume of Pyramid shorts in the early eighties, now produces many of its own shorts and interstitials.

Submissions to Pyramid may be sent to the attention of Pat Hamada, director of acquisitions.

Tapestry International

920 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 505-2288.

"I think, unfortunately, it's getting worse, not better," Tapestry president Nancy Walzog says of the shorts market.

Tapestry has been in business since 1987 and acquires approximately 10 to 12 shorts per year, mostly in the 30-minute range with very few exceptions. Walzog asserts that broadcasters offer "not more than a couple of thousand dollars for shorts in general" and tend to favor either extremely brief entries for interstitials or 30-minute programs. Tapestry has found that 12- to 18-minute films tend to be too long for fillers and too brief for half-hour time slots.

Tapestry recently marketed Claudia Silver's half-hour comedy *Kalamazoo* to a number of foreign territories, and its most successful short release to date has been Ted Demme and Gregory O'Connor's 22-minute drama *The Bet.*

Interested parties may send VHS submissions to acquisitions staffer Anthony Latorella.

HOW CAN THE SITUATION FOR SHORTS IN THE US improve? Picture Start's Jeff Hellyer makes a plea for shorts enthusiasts to support such films whenever they appear in theaters and on video store shelves, and to write fan letters to exhibitors and networks that program short works. HBO, for example, considers a major write-in campaign to consist only of three letters, and many public television stations regard a single telephone call as representing 1,000 viewers.

Film festivals offer no guarantees for ideal exposure. The British Short Film Festival (held the first week of September in London) reportedly scheduled 1 a.m. screenings for certain films; not surprisingly, attendance was sparse. On the other hand, the New York Expo of Short Film and Video goes out of its way to provide opportunities for visiting filmmakers to meet Manhattan-based shorts distributors, hosting receptions and special screenings.

Even as he stresses the importance of locating a distributor to stand behind an independent short, Hellyer, like everyone else, cautions filmmakers against utopian visions of break-even returns or profitability. "It's probably one film in a hundred that's really going to see a return."

Max J. Alvarez is a freelance writer and independent filmmaker based in Bethesda, Maryland

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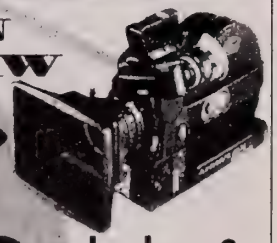
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Field Reports

Shorts Stories FROM SUNDANCE

BY DANA HARRIS

SHORT FILMS ARE FESTIVAL STANDBYS THAT rarely contain "market value." However, if there's any festival that could turn five minutes of 16mm film into gold, it's Sundance. Filmmakers who win a slot at the Big Kahuna of the American festival circuit may well expect more than just the bliss of finding an audience. Forget the feather in your cap—what about a three-picture deal in your back pocket?

Ask a dozen filmmakers whose short films appeared at the 1995 Sundance Film Festival, and you'll get a half-dozen different answers. Everyone says it's a great place to meet people; some made valuable connections. Some filmmakers found distributors, and others liked the free pair of jeans (courtesy of The Gap, the shorts program's sponsor), but there's a distinct absence of fame, fortune, or even one-picture deals.

Reality check

Sundance offers something valuable to any filmmaker: high-quality exposure. Shorts are screened three or four times to an audience hungry for new talent, and for some this opportunity alone is enough.

"I got a great response," says James Spione, the writer-director of *Garden*. "I met filmmakers and other people in the business. I set up a screening in L.A., had interest from TV producers, and I'm now negotiating making a short film for pay-per-view."

Still, Spione says he can't attribute all his good fortune to Sundance. "I have an agent, and this made it easier for her. It helped that I had a second film there that I produced (*Parallel Sons*). That gave me higher visibility, and I was able to exploit that a little bit to cross-promote my work. Still, it's hard to gauge how much discussion Sundance can create about your work."

Keith Thomson, who directed *Cupidity*, says his short's screening led to a production company hiring him to shoot a feature. Dan Doyle's *Burning Love* was picked up by Good Machine, and filmmaker Terracino said that after Ira Deutchman's new production company saw *My Polish Waiter* at Sundance, they asked him to do another short.

However, as Doyle describes his experience, "I'm no richer. I met a lot of people and hooked up with producers, but as to whether or not any of it works out, I have no idea."

The Sundance seal of approval

One of the most frequently mentioned benefits is the magic of your short being suddenly transformed into A Sundance Film. Sundance paves a film's way to other festivals (often free of the usual entry fees and forms) and gives hope that a tape sent will actually be a tape watched.

"It gave me instant credibility, a calling card," says Spione. "I know they won't immediately throw my tape on the shelf."

This transformation from short to valuable property can be disconcerting. "It's like The Wizard of Oz," says Thomson. "Give the scarecrow a diploma, and he's smart. You can go to Hollywood with the Sundance sheepskin. That's the effect and appeal of the festival, besides the skiing and free food."

Barbara Heller, director of *Little Women in Transit*, compares Sundance to "going to an Ivy League college. It gives your film a pedigree that a lot of people care about."

That cachet is the ethereal byproduct of the very practical John Cooper. He's the programmer behind Sundance's shorts (as well as the creator of the shorts program) and is ultimately responsible for deciding which of the more than 1,000 short film submissions will make one of the 50-odd festival slots. Cooper says the festival becomes a clearinghouse for many of the same short films that feed agents and producers' slush piles—only it's Cooper's team doing the grunt work.

"We don't look for films that are calling cards," says Cooper. "A good film is one that has vision and tells a good story in an interesting way. Not interesting as in 'that's nice' or sitcoms; it needs to have some vitality.

"The short film program has proven to be a very effective way to find new talent," says Cooper. "It filters through the thousands."

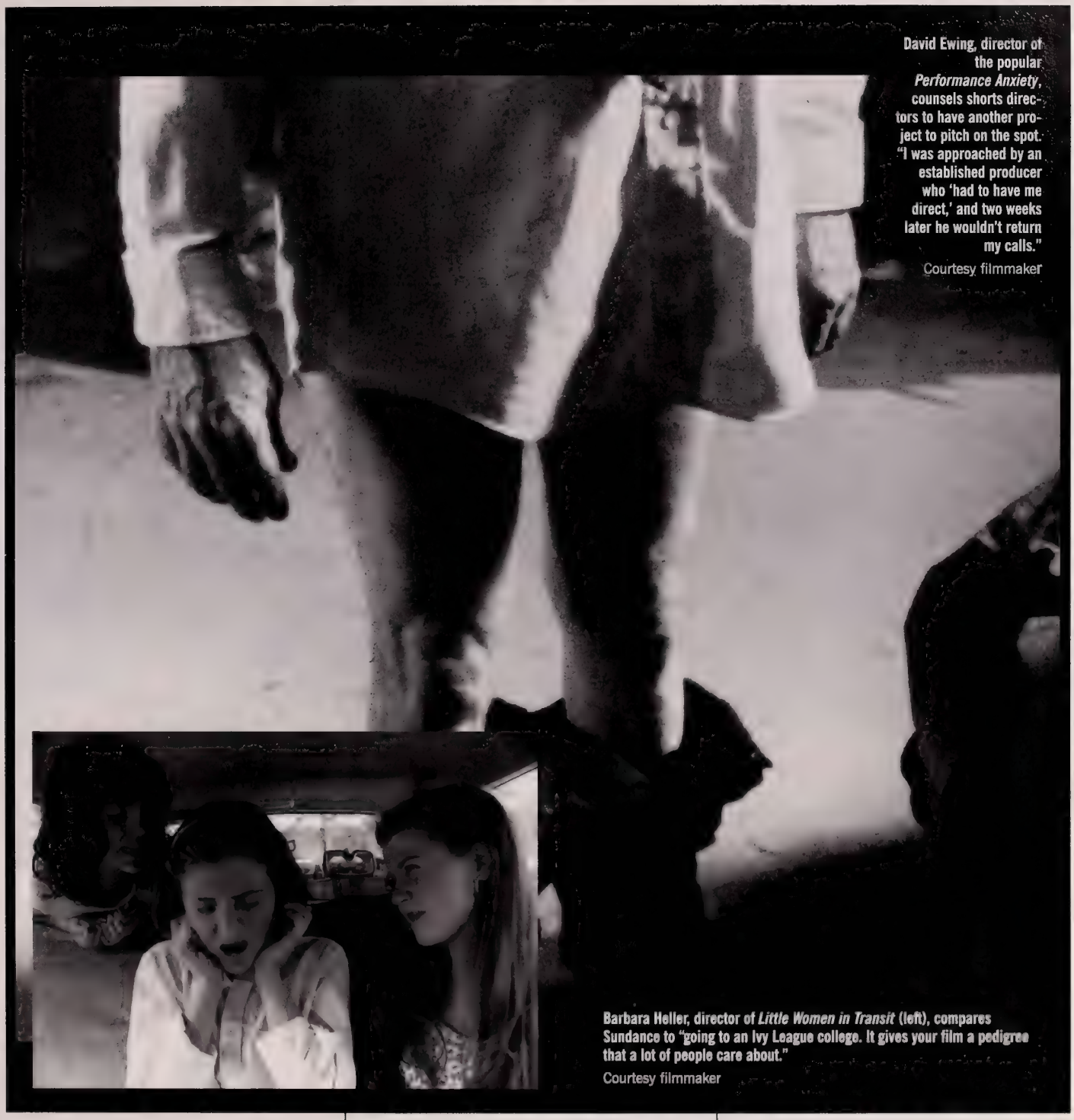
Why do you think they call them "shorts"?

Despite the concentration of talent and Cooper's passion for short films (most oft-heard phrase: "Cooper is terrific."), filmmakers say that shorts struggle for attention at Sundance. Filmmakers with shorts must pay their own way to the festival, and some found the attention underwhelming.

"You're the fly on the wall," says David Ewing, director of *Performance Anxiety*. "I don't think Sundance is the kingmaking opportunity for shorts as it is for features. There's no one festival that's a launching pad for short films. Sundance can do that for a feature, but you'll never see people dying to get tickets for a short." (However, Cooper notes that the shorts programs "continue to be one of the most popular" and that most of last year's shorts programs sold out.)

When Michael LaHaie came to Sundance, he wasn't seeking industry attention for his short, *Critizen*. He'd already secured a distributor and saw the festival as a bonus for what began as his senior project at San Francisco State University. However, that didn't dispel his feeling that having a short granted only second-class citizenship.

"I didn't look for agents; I wanted to see the community," says LaHaie. "I was at this



David Ewing, director of the popular *Performance Anxiety*, counsels shorts directors to have another project to pitch on the spot. "I was approached by an established producer who 'had to have me direct,' and two weeks later he wouldn't return my calls."
Courtesy filmmaker

Barbara Heller, director of *Little Women in Transit* (left), compares Sundance to "going to an Ivy League college. It gives your film a pedigree that a lot of people care about."
Courtesy filmmaker

great festival, but it was hard to see a film. It's not Sundance's fault; it's just too big. It didn't feel like a true independent festival—more like a stepping-stone festival. If Sundance was a cool family's get-together, then I was at the kid's table.

"After I got over that," he adds, "I had more fun."

While Heller found Sundance more hospitable, she also was startled to see that features definitely took the front seat. "Friends told me that shorts aren't uppermost in people's minds, but I somehow couldn't believe it, because it was so important to me. They were right. It was kind of a rude awakening, but the film was very well received. Cooper really takes care of the short filmmakers. He's very accessible, you're well-treated, and you have the same privileges as feature filmmakers. But it's a lot like high school. Everyone's trying to figure out who's cool."

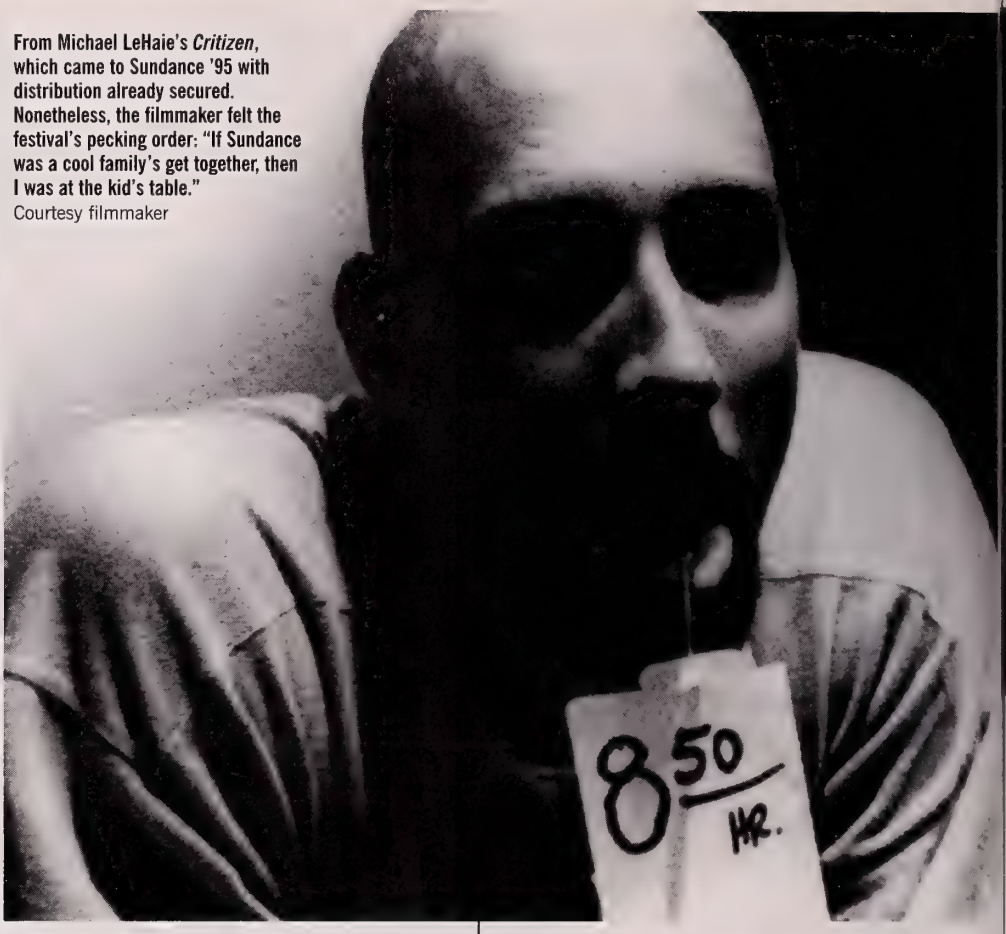
One filmmaker found a high-school familiar solution. Says Mike Mitchell, director of *Chunks of Life*, "We became very popular because we had transportation."

The aftermath

Most of the filmmakers interviewed have sold or found distributors for their films. Thomson, who had a number of interested distributors, was able to recoup his costs by selling *Cupidity*

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From Michael LeHaie's *Critizen*, which came to Sundance '95 with distribution already secured. Nonetheless, the filmmaker felt the festival's pecking order: "If Sundance was a cool family's get together, then I was at the kid's table."
Courtesy filmmaker

to European TV stations. Spione's *Garden* got an offer from Bravo, and Terracino's *My Polish Waiter* will be handled by Lakeshore Pictures.

However, to further dispel fantasies that Sundance has the Midas touch, many filmmakers had deals before they came to Sundance, and those who earned them afterward give Sundance only partial credit.

For example, David Koepp, director of *Suspicious*, has just finished shooting an $8.7 million picture for Universal from his own script—but he'd already written several scripts for the studio prior to going to Sundance with his short, and he is one of the writers on the new Tom Cruise vehicle, *Mission Impossible*.

Still, Koepp says *Suspicious* was key to closing the deal on his own film. "The short definitely played into being able to do this. Doing a short film means a lot to a studio, because it shows you're entrepreneurial, rather than stepping into existing entities like sitcoms."

Heller had signed her short with producers' representatives In Pictures pre-Sundance, which subsequently sold *Little Women in Transit* to Bravo/Independent Feature Channel and to Channel Four in England. Yet when it comes to the feature she's currently co-writing, she expects to go out and raise the funding herself.

"At Sundance, people wanted to know what my plans were, did I have a script, please send it, and some of them [said] keep in touch," says Heller. "But I know people who waited 'in development' for four years. I want to skip the waiting around. No one's going to give you a project to direct unless you create it yourself."

Sundance do's and don'ts

None of these filmmakers saw being selected for Sundance as a passport to Nirvana (or Hollywood), but all of them saw that there were rules of the road—and some regretted not following them.

• *You are the pursuer, not the pursued.* "It's 99 percent pursuit," says Thomson, a first-time filmmaker. Spione, who won a student Academy Award for his first short eight years ago, agrees.

"The first one went to my head too much," says Spione. "My biggest mistake was thinking, 'It's going to do something for me.' It's not going to. Drawing attention to the film is my responsibility."

Ewing, whose film won the Critics Week award at Cannes, suffered a similar pride-before-fall at Sundance. "I got a little big for



my britches," he admits. "After Sundance I made the classic mistakes. I didn't think it played as well on cassette as on a big screen, so I called agents and set up screenings instead of sending out cassettes. They don't have time to come to screenings."

• *If you want to shoot a feature, have a script under your arm.* "People are much more accessible at Sundance than in their daily lives," says Ewing. "You've got to show something when people are receptive. You can win all the festivals in the world, but without another project there's not much they can do for you."

Ewing adds that time is of the essence. "People's attention spans are limited, and the excitement of seeing something you really like wears off. I was approached by an established producer who 'had' to have me direct, and two weeks later he wouldn't return my phone calls."

• *Have your own network.* While Sundance offers more players per square inch than any other festival, it only lasts 10 days. All the power in the world does no good without the talent and support to harness it.

"It depends on what level you're at," says Spione. "I was ready for something that good to happen. I was in control of my craft, I was at a point where I had the resources to follow up, and I already had an agent. What I needed was to get my foot in the door. I kept asking myself, 'How am I going to make this work for me? How am I going to use this?' "

• *Send Sundance your film. Nothing else.* When your short gets to the Sundance office, it must go it alone. "Phone calls, faxes, articles—I don't look into them," says Cooper. "I have select people whose opinions I respect, and they only call if they've seen something they really like. When it gets down to it, it's the film."

Dana Harris is a freelance film journalist and a filmmaker in Norwalk, CT.

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TIANANMEN: SQUARING OFF OVER



CRITICS CLAMOR AT THE GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE

BY JERRY WHITE

CARMA HINTON AND RICHARD GORDON HAVE SPENT THE BETTER part of their careers documenting life in modern China, so it was inevitable that they turn their attention to the student democracy movement and Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989. The result is *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, a scrupulously researched investigation of the bloody standoff between students and government officials. Unlike the news reportage of the day, the three-hour documentary digs deep, revealing where the movement's roots lie: we're shown the history of previous student movements in China, the government's fickle shifts in policy towards political reform, and the catalytic impact of reformer Hu Yaobang's funeral. And unlike more recent documentaries, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* takes great pains to tease out the various strands on both sides, revealing the internal factions within the government and student leadership in a way that vastly complicates and more accurately reflects the course of events.

Proof of the film's evenhandedness has come in the form of denunciations both from leaders within the pro-democracy student movement and from the Chinese government. But the controversy that surrounded it for so many months—culminating in China's retaliation by blocking director Zhang Yimou from attending the New York Film Festival—should not overshadow the value of Hinton and Gordon's research. Their work has made available an entirely new body of primary material on the student uprising—including extensive interviews, Chinese government newscasts, home videos, and music videos—all of which bring to life facets of the event that few in the West had bothered to consider.

Carma Hinton occupies an unusual place as a cultural intermediary between East and West, having been born in China to American parents (Chinese is her first language) and living there until age 21, when she moved to the United States to attend the University of Pennsylvania. Her father, William Hinton, is a prominent China scholar, and before starting a filmmaking career she accompanied him on his visits to Long Bow, a rural village that served as the microcosm through which he examined China's land reform in his books *Fanshen* and *Shenfan*. Carma Hinton would later return to Long Bow as a filmmaker, where she and husband Richard Gordon made all their films prior to *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. Beginning with *Stilt Dancers of Long Bow Village* (1981), Gordon, who was trained as a still photographer, has acted as primary cinematographer on all their films,

while Hinton conducts the interviews.

The epic political struggles depicted in *Gate* are a departure from Hinton and Gordon's more intimate portraits in *One Village in China* (1987), a film trilogy that examines the life of a Catholic village doctor (*To Taste One Hundred Herbs*), the status of women in Chinese society (*Small Happiness*), and the de-collectivization of land in the mid-eighties (*All Under Heaven*). Each delves into cultural, economic, and spiritual issues in great detail, using interviews, voiceover narration, and lyrical photography to create a portrait of a Chinese people during a time of enormous change, when the past collides with the future. But none approaches the ambitious scale of *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. Nor had the two filmmakers tackled an archival project previously, let alone one this size.



Photo: AP/World Wide; all photos courtesy Long Bow Group

HINTON AND GORDON BEGAN THINKING ABOUT DOING A FILM AS SOON AS the monumental events of May 1989 began unfolding. "It was not an easy decision to get into something like this," Hinton admits. "I knew that any documentary—to say nothing of something of this scale, between the funding and the research and the actual making of the film—would probably take years of our lives. Once we decided, it really did take five or six years." A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities "to push the frontier of scholarship," Hinton recalls, is what got the project moving. "We had to work with scholars to do original research on all fronts," Hinton recalls. "That's impossible to do without the kind of support we got from the NEH." Hinton also credits crucial startup monies from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations. Funding from the Independent Television Service came in at a later stage.

Universal Pictures also provided $150,000 in seed money, and that has complicated the distribution picture. According to the filmmakers, their contract with the studio states that if any company other than Universal distributes the film to commercial theaters, the money must be paid back. Since few distributors willing to pick up a three-hour documentary on China would provide an advance that large, it's Universal or no one for theatrical distribution. And Universal passed after seeing a 30-minute clip (Hinton notes that "to revise it for their standards would make it unacceptable to our standards"). So the film will probably be consigned to nontheatrical distribution and nonprofit art houses. Hinton also points out that "paying them back is not the only hurdle for theatrical release." There's also the matter of licensing fees for all that archival footage, which mounts considerably when theatrical rights are added.

Their primary goal was to create a credible record of the confusing and still widely contested facts of the uprising, one that draws on a truly diverse pool of subjects. "The number-one concern we had was for the film to be a forum for a range of different voices talking about what China needs," says Hinton. Those voices were largely absent from Western news coverage of the uprising. "One thing that struck me was that hardly any Chinese got to really speak, Hinton recalls. "Mainly it was American anchors or reporters explaining what the Chinese wanted or did and didn't do.... You could hardly hear any Chinese voices finish an idea, or even a sentence." Any time a Chinese person started to speak, Gordon says, the anchors tended to "look for a cutaway." *Gate* features interviews with student leaders, union leaders, academics, former government officials, the parent of a slain student, and a pop star from Taiwan who took part in the hunger strikes on the square, among others. While many of the key players go before the duo's camera (including union leader Han Dongfang, literary critic Liu Xiaobo, and reformist politician Wu Guoguang), Gordon notes that "We talked to a lot of different types of participants, people who are not well known and didn't have anything to gain or lose by what they said. And often times those are the best sources."

In trying to make sense of the diverse array of testimony, Gordon says, "The first level was to get the facts straight. That took years." Finding out what really happened turned out to be far more difficult than either had anticipated. "We found there's just a huge amount of disinformation," says Gordon, "so we had to talk to as many people as we could, because often times people would make self-serving statements. In other cases, people would say things that I think they genuinely believed to be true, but we found by reconstructing events on video from several different perspectives that they were not true."

They also wanted to avoid sensationalism and present a sober, even-handed portrait of the uprising. "We didn't want to tell a simple chronological story where the drum beats faster and faster as you approach the night of June 3," says Gordon. They also wanted to dispel the impression that the army shot their way "all the way to the center of Tiananmen Square," says Hinton, and "slaughtered their way to the monument,

"The first level was to get the facts

where thousands of students were." She adds, "The reality was much more complicated." The film has been criticized for being too nice to the government, but as Hinton responds, "Just because they opened fire on peaceful protesters doesn't mean that you can say anything."

Filming in China on a topic still so sensitive to the government presented many difficulties. (The Chinese government still refuses to discuss the June 4 massacre and denies that anyone other than soldiers were killed.) Not the least of these obstacles was getting people to talk on camera, since there still is the fear of reprisal from the government. But, according to Hinton, many people are "courageously staying in China and trying to push the limits of free speech, of intellectual debate. They were very open and above board about what they believe in, and they feel it's their duty to speak out." Anyone who appeared on camera or gave them footage was free to back out at almost any stage. In a few cases, Hinton recalls, it was the filmmakers who pulled the plug. "Even though the person was willing to go on the record, we thought the situation was a little too precarious and decided not to do it." Gordon summed up their attitude by saying, "We have always believed that people's ongoing lives were more important than the development of our film."

Assembling the miles of film and video footage was a massive organizational task. "We were a bit naïve when we started," Gordon confesses. "We thought we could go through about seventy to one hundred hours of material, both network and home video. It turned out we had to go through almost four times that." Some of the most striking footage was taken with consumer-grade video cameras, especially shots during the bloodiest and most chaotic parts of the massacre. "Because of the [economic] reforms," Hinton explains, "there were some cameras in private hands, whereas that was *unheard of* before." Nonetheless, this was not easy material to locate. "There's no one place to go," says Gordon. "We just tried to put out as wide a net as possible."

In trying to gain access to network news broadcasts and other archival footage, the filmmakers found many common assumptions to be unfounded. Take, for example, the ease of dealing with American versus Chinese TV networks. According to Gordon, "It's much easier to function in China than amongst capitalist barracudas." He cites their chief bogeyman as being CNN, saying they were "just a nightmare to deal with." Ultimately, the archival research took on a truly transnational character, with research also being conducted in Russia and Spain. It was a Spanish TV crew that shot the most interesting footage the night of June 3, when the Chinese army was ordered to recapture Tiananmen Square. "It took literally months to get access to their material, just because they're so disorganized," says Gordon. "We had to send people into Spain to work with them personally, because you can't work from a distance."

Altogether Hinton and Gordon amassed about 400 hours of footage, making theirs the largest single archive on this subject. The



Student leaders and hunger strikers like Wuer Kaixi and Liu Xiaobo are among the key players interviewed for *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*.

The Chinese government cried foul—"almost as could be expected," says Hinton— after *Gate* showed footage of the hunger strike and the post-massacre crackdown.

straight. That took years." — Richard Gordon

future of this material remains in question, although Gordon is enthusiastic about its potential. "We have a lot of the extant material on student demonstrations, so that one could, later on, provide that to scholars." Unfortunately, says Gordon, "A lot of the best footage...we can't distribute, because it's shot by network crews and protected by international copyright." Again, the Chinese material is far easier to distribute, since they are not signatories to the Berne Convention, an international copyright agreement, and therefore do not have as many restrictions on what cannot be copied and redistributed. Despite Hinton and Gordon's aspiration to create an archive of the footage they amassed, it remains in dry dock. "One of our hopes is that, since we had spent so much time with it and databased it and in many cases translated it," says Gordon, "we can find some good homes for it. We're really hoping that we can find an enlightened foundation or patron to allow us to make it accessible to literally thousands of potential users." Their de facto archive contains not only footage of demonstrations (reaching back to the twenties), but Chinese newscasts, music videos, and other images that, as Gordon says, build up a sense of the fabric of Chinese life.

CRITICISM OF *THE GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE* FIRST STARTED TO HIT THE fan a good five months before its premiere at the New York Film Festival last September. The filmmaking duo have been fighting battles of one kind or another ever since.

The first wave of controversy centered around their depiction of the divisions within the student camp and how one faction, led by Chai Ling, were pushing for a confrontation with the Army despite the inevitably deadly consequences. An especially prickly point concerns a TV interview given days before the massacre by Chai Ling in which she says, "What we are actually hoping for is bloodshed...Only when the square is awash with blood will the people of China open their eyes." (Chai, who currently lives in Boston, refused the filmmakers' repeated requests for an interview.) A debate ensued in the *New York Times* over the exact translation of this statement. It began with a *New York Times* article on April 30, 1995, about Chai and the dissidents six years after the event. Journalist Patrick Tyler quoted the statement and questioned some of the student leaders' tactics. Chai claimed in a letter to the editor published the following week that the English equivalent of her statement is not "hoping for bloodshed" but "what we can expect next is bloodshed." Hinton, who included this interview in the film, wrote to the *Times*, "The Chinese word 'qidai' can only mean 'hoping for' and any native speaker of Chinese would agree"; her letter, however, was not published.

Just a few days before this skirmish, Chai published an article attacking the as-yet-unfinished film in *World Journal*, a North American, pro-dissident Chinese language newspaper. It was reprinted in several dissident newspapers as well as the Hong Kong journal *Ming Pao Monthly*. She wrote, "Certain individuals, for the sake of gaining approval of the [Chinese] authorities, have racked their brains for ways and means to come up with policies for them. And there is another person with a pro-Communist history [Hinton] who has been hawking [her] documentary film for crude commercial gain by taking things out of context and trying to show up something new, unreasonably turning history on its head and calling black white."

This was the start of a "virtual mini-mountain" of condemnations of the film by Chinese student dissidents, according to Geremie Barme, one of the film's scriptwriters and author of an upcoming book *In the Red: Studies in Contemporary Chinese Culture*. Significantly, these all came long before *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* had been completed. Hinton and Gordon both point to the sad irony—that the proponents of democratic reform are using inflammatory and defensive rhetoric to stifle opposition to anything they do. Hinton's Chinese Communist education taught her that compromise is bad, she explains, so people do not believe one can be critical of something that is in some ways positive. The students defaming the film "are the children of the Communists," Gordon notes. "They have become what they hate."

Next, the Chinese government condemned the film, "almost as could be predicted," Hinton wryly notes. Again these statements came before the film was finished, without anyone in the government having seen it. When Chinese officials caught wind that *Gate* was to be shown in the New York Film Festival, an official from the Chinese Consulate in New York went to program director Richard Peña and demanded that the film be removed. When Peña flatly declined, the government urged director Zhang Yimou to stay home rather than accompany his film *Shanghai Triad* to the festival, where it held the prestigious opening night spot. Zhang, dependent on government support to keep working, quietly agreed.

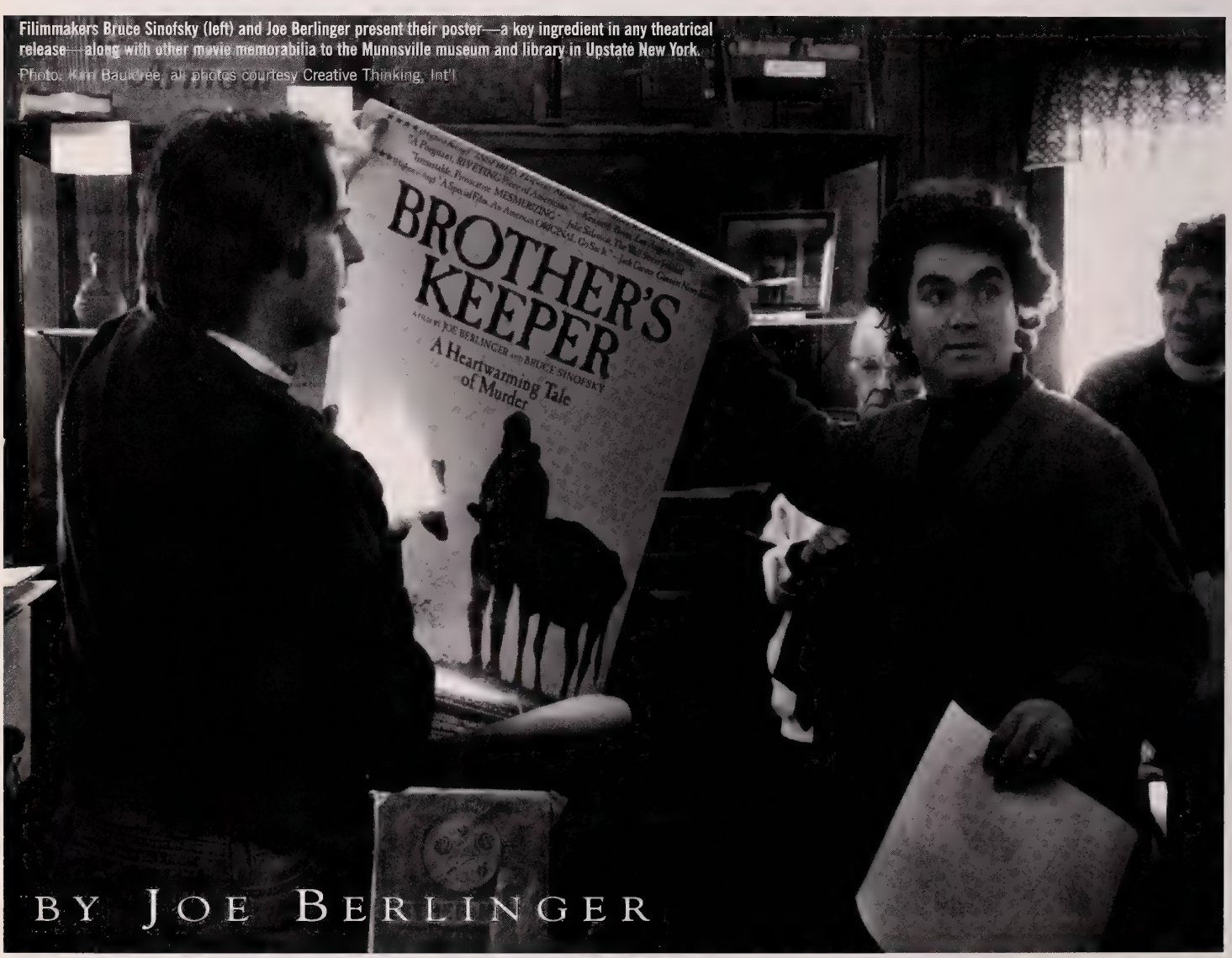
Overnight, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* became a *cause célèbre*. While both filmmakers seem grateful for the incredible amount of publicity generated, they are philosophic about the Chinese protests. "Certain officials were doing this for other officials to see," Hinton speculates, noting that it was important within Government circles to appear belligerent and uncompromising towards the perceived enemy. Gordon points out, "It's not clear they were responding to our movie. They have not seen our movie." Rather, they were acting more on an assumption that they wouldn't like it, which, Gordon chuckles, "was a pretty good guess."

Despite the furor surrounding the film, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* is a thoughtful, serious work that maintains a sense of credibility and historical tentativeness. The facts of Tiananmen Square in June 1989 are still not fully known, say Hinton and Gordon, and may not be for many years to come, possibly until China undergoes yet another major political mutation in the post-Deng era. Until then, one must turn to the disparate, contradictory voices of the Chinese participants. The overall effect is not a neat historical package, but it makes real the experience as lived by individual people. And like all of Hinton and Gordon's work, this sense of firsthand experience, of intimacy, is what it's all about—even for a subject as epic as this. As Hinton says, "History is made by numerous individuals wrestling with their personal decisions. And that's the most important thing for us."

Jerry White is on the program staff of the Neighborhood Film/Video Project and the Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema

A GUIDE TO SELF

THE SECRETS TO MANY HAPPY RETURNS



Filimmakers Bruce Sinofsky (left) and Joe Berlinger present their poster—a key ingredient in any theatrical release—along with other movie memorabilia to the Munnsville museum and library in Upstate New York.
Photo: Kim Bauldree, all photos courtesy Creative Thinking, Int'l

BY JOE BERLINGER

IN SOME CIRCLES, OUR FEATURE FILM *BROTHER'S KEEPER* IS MORE FAMOUS for its self-distribution effort than for the film itself. After all, it earned almost $1.5 million at the box office—an impressive box office gross for any independent film, let alone one without the benefit of a marketing and sales campaign waged by an established distributor with clout, contacts, and know-how. The battle for that box office gross was hard-won, and it took more than a year of our lives. Would my partner, Bruce Sinofsky, and I do it again, knowing what we know now? Definitely. After all, upon the conclusion of our theatrical release, *Brother's Keeper* went on to a successful home video release (Fox Lorber), was broadcast on

DISTRIBUTION:

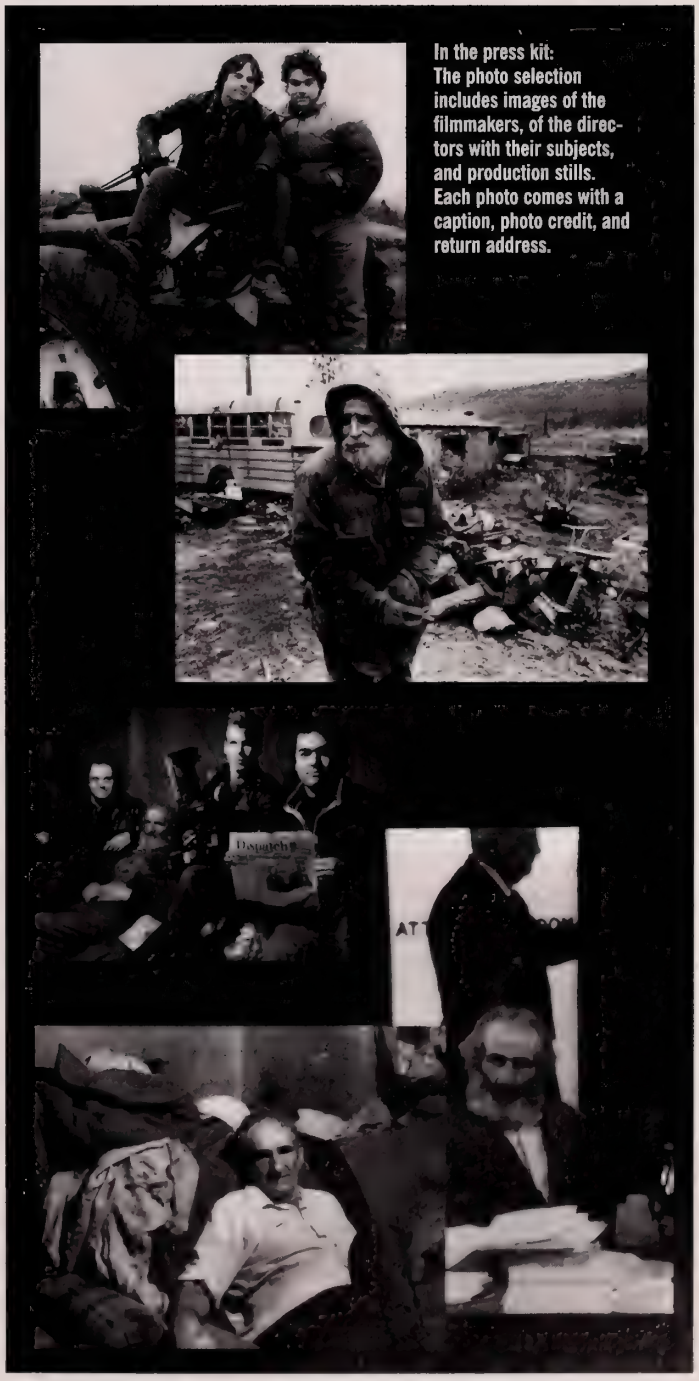
PBS's *American Playhouse* (our primary source of postproduction financing), and was televised in 17 countries worldwide.

Before we began showing *Brother's Keeper* on the festival circuit, the film might not have seemed a likely candidate for theatrical distribution. First of all, it is a nonfiction film—yes, a documentary. For years documentaries have been viewed as even more noxious to distributors than foreign films. For instance, *Variety* reported that documentary features account for only one-tenth of one percent of the total 1994 national box office receipts. Second, the film is about a small rural community in upstate New York and four illiterate dairy farmers, one of whom was accused of murdering his elderly bed-mate and brother. At first look, this is not an auspicious scenario for boffo box office.

In January 1992, the film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival where it won the coveted Audience Award. Then when it received extensive feature coverage and glowing reviews in such publications as *Variety*, the *Hollywood Reporter*, *Premiere*, and the *New York Times*, we fully expected to walk away with a sweet distribution deal and a nice chunk of change as an advance. Some distribution offers were made, but respectable advances were not part of the proposed deals. In general, distributors offered us piddling advances or none at all. And most of those distributors wanted to release the film in 16mm, which would automatically ghettoize the film to a limited number of art houses.

Most important, no one seemed to have a concrete, specialized marketing plan to handle our odd little film. Some distributors acquire a large number of independent films relatively cheaply and indiscriminately. They then toss them out into the marketplace, and it is sink or swim: the movies that immediately generate good box office are followed up on and nurtured with strong advertising campaigns and aggressive bookings. The rest are abandoned to their fate—and box office oblivion. We feared that without tender loving care, our film might be pulled by a distributor before it had time to find its audience.

It became obvious that if *Brother's Keeper* were to succeed in the marketplace, self-distribution was the only way to go. Bruce and I knew that only we would give the film the passionate, personal marketing and sales campaign that the film needed in order to find its audience. As with the production of the film itself, our self-distribution of *Brother's Keeper* was an unlikely success story of overcoming the odds without help. We produced the film on weekends and evenings while holding down full-time jobs, and we did it without any financial assistance or co-production monies (until *American Playhouse* stepped in with completion funds after seeing a rough assembly of dailies). With self-distribution we believed that our enthusiasm and determination more than compensated for our



In the press kit:
The photo selection includes images of the filmmakers, of the directors with their subjects, and production stills. Each photo comes with a caption, photo credit, and return address.

lack of distribution experience and know-how.

What follows are some lessons and thoughts provoked by our particular experience with *Brother's Keeper*. When writing this, I used the following guideline: "Gee, I wish I had known this when we started." For us, the process of self-distribution involved reinventing the wheel because information is closely guarded. By and large, we set out on this journey without a road map. Perhaps the lessons outlined below can help you make a more informed decision than we did.

Distributors Can Be (and Often Are) Dead Wrong

The single most important factor in the success of self-distribution is your deep, strong, and unshakable belief in your film. The fact that distributors and, later, some theaters pass over your film does not mean that it is not marketable. The history books bulge with stories of films that distributors thought were duds but went on to critical and box office success. Conversely, innumerable "sure-fire hits" have bombed at the box office, creating ulcers and unemployment for many a distribution executive. The lesson: It is almost impossible to predict success, so if you *really* believe in your film, do not accept a lousy distribution deal.

Self-distribution should not be considered a last resort. You should think of it as a viable option, along with (one hopes) other distribution offers. If you want a bigger advance, or if you feel that the distributor does not really understand or appreciate your film, or if the marketing plan is not consistent with your vision of the film, then self-distribution might be the way to go.

There Are (Much) Easier Ways to Make a Living

Before you turn down those no-advance distribution offers, however, be forewarned: there are easier ways to make a living than self-distribution. In fact, putting the funding together to get your film made might seem like a piece of cake in comparison. Self-distribution is not for everybody. The established distribution system is ruthless to low-budget, offbeat films. You are the first to be pulled off the screen by the theaters, and you are the last to be paid. Prints, advertising, and professional promo materials are expensive. And the work is all-consuming.

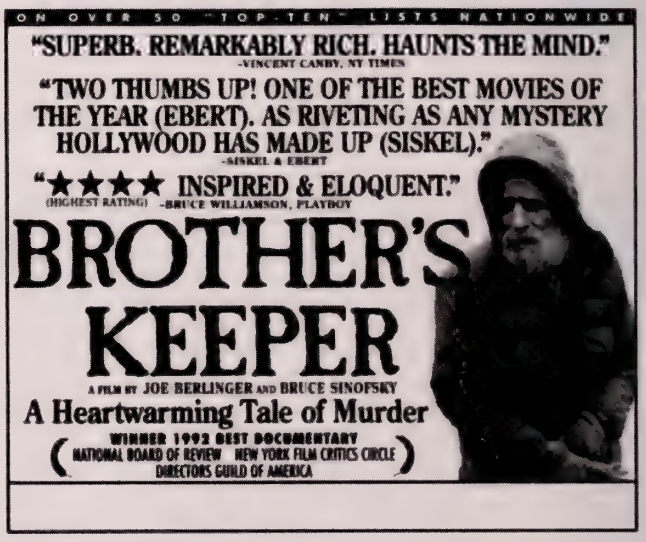
Before you dive into self-distribution, ask yourself if you are willing to expend the time and energy needed. Bruce and I spent literally a solid year distributing *Brother's Keeper* to the exclusion of all other work. When the critical success of *Brother's Keeper* began to attract offers to direct new projects, we needed tremendous will power to turn them down. We had to take ourselves out of production just as the time was ripe for us to sign new deals. In order to succeed, we devoted ourselves one hundred percent to distribution. We hoped that those offers to direct new projects would still be around in a year. It is a risk you should be prepared to take.

Why do it, then? If a distribution deal does not materialize, there is no choice—self-distribute or give up the idea of a theatrical release. For others (as with us), self-distribution is better than accepting a bad deal. It assures you creative control over every aspect of your film's marketing and promotion. This control was especially important and gratifying for us. From poster design to trailers to press releases, our imprint—for better or worse—was on everything. Self-distribution is also a great way to learn the distribution game. You will be much more savvy the next time you sit down to hammer out a distribution deal.

Image Is Everything

The most successful self-distribution effort begins long before the film is finished. Thinking about marketing even before you expose your first frame of film will pay off with valuable dividends—either landing you a better distribution deal, or giving you the tools to launch a successful self-distribution effort.

Here are some ways to think about marketing right from the start.

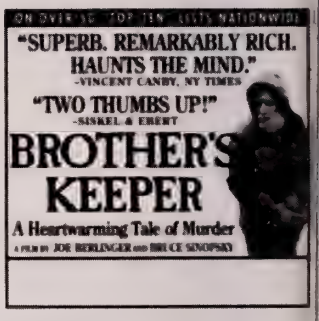


2 col x 3.5" = 7"



1 col x 1" = 1





1 col x 2" = 2"

• **Title**: Some film titles just grab you. Others are a bore, or are so personal that they have no meaning to the viewer. Try to come up with a snappy title that takes on a life of its own. The title *Brother's Keeper* came to me early in the production. I had been dragged to synagogue by my father-in-law one beautiful September morning during the High Holy Days. Since my Hebrew is less than perfect, I was flipping through the Bible to keep the boredom at bay. I just happened to come across the passage about Cain and Abel and immediately realized that *Brother's Keeper* was a perfect title. It felt right, and Bruce and I never seriously considered another option.

• **Tag line**: Almost as important as the title is the movie's tag line. In a few short words, you have another chance to tease your potential ticket-buyer into seeing the movie. Most people loved our choice of "A Heartwarming Tale of Murder." Although the tag line did draw audi-

ences, it also elicited some strong reactions from viewers who thought it was misleading—that it implied Delbert Ward had, indeed, murdered his brother Bill. Our belief is that the tag line suits the film well; both are full of ambiguity. After all, murder is generally not considered a heartwarming activity. So, the tag line could imply that Delbert is guilty or innocent—or both. It conveys both the tenor of the film (heartwarming) and the "plot" (murder). And frankly, a little bit of controversy is good for publicity.

• **Stills**: While you are shooting your film, take plenty of stills. Bring a photographer along (and make sure you appear in some of the pictures).



Left: The ad slicks provided by Sinofsky and Berlinger came in a variety of standard sizes, with a blank space for theaters to list showtimes.

Above: Advertising, Manhattan-style. When *Brother's Keeper* reopened in New York City after a five month hiatus, up went the posters with a 'back by popular demand' sticker.

The stills should be as evocative (if not more!) than the film.

• **Behind-the-scenes footage**: As long as you are taking stills, do yourself a favor and grab some B-roll of you and your crew working (a consumer Hi-8 machine will do). If your film has a special angle, and you have success in getting television press for your film during its release, you will be glad to have this footage. With the proliferation of EPKs (Electronic Press Kits), segment producers have come to expect behind-the-scenes footage. It could mean the difference between landing a story and losing one. With our B-roll in hand, we ended up on CNN's *Show Biz Weekly* and on *Entertainment Tonight*, among others.

• **Press Kits**: Start creating the elements for your press kit from Day One. Think carefully how to position your film in the press materials. We were surprised to see just how much of our written material was picked up and reported—in some cases verbatim—by the press. If your press release, synopsis, bios, and director's statement are well-written, editors and reporters will be more likely to feature your film in their publication. Try to get any press you can about the making of your film—even from hometown papers—and include clips in your press packets.

• **Logo and stationery**: Your logo is one of the most important elements in your marketing campaign. You do not, however, have to spend a lot of money on graphic designer fees to come up with an effective logo. One day while flipping through my typeface book, I discovered a type called Caslon Antique that evoked antique type used 200 years ago. That discovery led us to use our title *Brother's Keeper* as the star of the logo. It was a simple, easy, and inexpensive solution that served us well.

A couple of years ago I attended the IFFM (Independent Feature Film Market) as a buyer. The marketing literature that landed in my box was appallingly amateurish: sloppy handwritten flyers, out-of-focus photos, and press releases with typos and grammatical errors. It was a real turnoff. I could not help but wonder how good the films could be if the marketing was so bad.

While not every filmmaker can be a marketing expert, you must make sure that everything you create conveys a professional image—from press releases to flyers, from logo treatments to postcards. You want the world to take you seriously. As a self-distributor, you have no track record and your film is an unknown quantity, so many theaters will ask for some promo materials before they decide to book your film. Therefore, the more professionally you present yourself, the more confident a theater will feel, and the more likely they will be to book you.

You Need an Organizational Structure

As simple as it sounds, many people who ask my advice have not thought about creating an organizational structure to service their release. It does not have to be fancy—after all, we started marketing *Brother's Keeper* in my small Brooklyn apartment, and we cleaned and shipped prints from Bruce's house in New Jersey. Eventually, we moved into an office as our release expanded and we knew we could pay rent.

Like any small business, you should determine areas of responsibility for each member of the company. Bruce, Loren Eiferman (my wife), and I worked full-time with a part-time assistant (who later became full-time once the release was in full swing). The hours could be absolutely grueling. At the height of the madness, there were many nights when we rolled into bed near dawn.

How are you going to keep track of which theaters you have contacted? Who will negotiate the terms of the bookings? Who will take care of contracts and bookkeeping? How will you do your photocopying? What about a phone system—will you have a simple voice mail system or someone who will answer the phone during business hours?

How will you handle print and poster shipping? Will you hire a service, or will you do it yourself? We chose to do it ourselves because we wanted to be in control of what marketing materials were shipped and to know at all times where our prints were. We felt we would maximize our print collection by handling the shipping ourselves. Shipping can be a nightmare—be prepared to track down lost prints and posters.

It is also crucial that you develop a plan to get paid and to track money. You must create professional invoices and send them regularly. You need to figure out how to deal with not getting paid, which unfortunately happens more than you will like. In fact, the aggressive pursuit of money due you is perhaps the most unpleasant task of distribution. Two years after the theatrical release of *Brother's Keeper* ended, we are still trying to collect our share of the grosses from a number of theaters. As you struggle to collect monies owed you, the bills will mount. Then you, in turn, have to juggle paying *your* creditors.

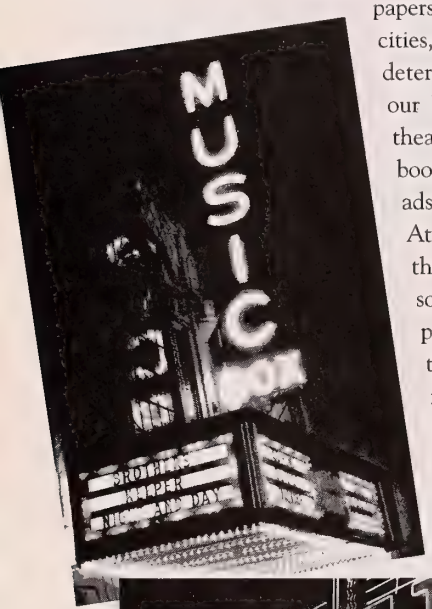
Expect to Reinvent the Wheel

The first decision you will have to make is whether to book the film yourself or hire an independent booking agent. The advantage of an agent is that he/she presumably has connections and a track record, and you can

be free to work on marketing and publicity. (If you do decide to go with a booking agent, make sure you check carefully that the agent can indeed deliver what he/she promises.) The major downside to a booking agent is that you are giving up a sizable piece of the pie, since the booking agent will want a percentage of your revenue. Because there were two of us—and we are control freaks—we decided to book the film ourselves. We were able to share responsibilities. I tended to focus on marketing and publicity, and Bruce tended to focus on booking and transport—although we swapped hats on many occasions.

A small handful of distribution executives were very generous with their advice when we started doing our homework. However, by and large, distributors tend to hang on tight to their information. Therefore, you have to do your homework, and you will often feel like you are reinventing the wheel.

Do not despair! The information *is* out there. When we could not find a list of theaters that play art films, we made weekly trips to a specialty magazine store that carries out-of-town papers, purchased newspapers from other cities, and looked at the movie page to determine which theaters were playing our kind of film. Then, we'd call the theater to find out who owned it and/or booked it (information is often in the ads) and then called the bookers.





The fruits of their labors: bookings in Chicago, Los Angeles, Manhattan, upstate New York, and many theaters in between.

Photo of Landmark Theater: Stephen D. Cannerelli, Syracuse Newspapers

At the risk of stating the obvious, all theaters/markets are not alike. In some cases you will be required to pay for all the marketing and advertising. Some theaters require less investment and carry less risk. They take care of the bulk of the advertising, but the payout will not be as good.

Some theaters are calendar houses—they set their schedule months in advance and print detailed and unchangeable schedules. Even if your film is doing extremely well, a calendar house cannot extend your run (unless they have more than one screen).

Most theaters operate with open engagements and respond to the demands of the marketplace. Theoretically, they will hold on to your film as long as it keeps selling tickets. One of the frustrations of self-distribution, however, is that even if your film is doing well in an open engagement, the established distribution companies will often demand that the theater pull your film prematurely to make way for their films. The theater, not wanting to offend a regular supplier, usually acquiesces, thus denying you the chance to exploit fully that particular market.

Theaters can be very territorial. If they do not premiere a film in their city, they might not take it as a "move-over," and if they also have screens in other cities, they might not book the film at all because of the snub in their home market. For instance, when we decided to open *Brother's Keeper* in New York City at the Film Forum, we alienated a booker for another New York theater who also books more than 30 theaters nationwide. We had a good run in New York, but we lost quite a few good venues elsewhere because of our decision.

You cannot make sweeping generalizations about theaters. Independent art houses are not necessarily kind-hearted and nurturing places for filmmakers; nor are theater chains always cold, unsympathetic, and bureaucratic. We encountered some theater chains that were terrific. The Nickelodeon in Boston—part of the Loews Theater chain at the time—was one of our best venues. They were great to work with, they gave our film attention and care, and they paid us promptly.

On the other hand, some privately owned small art houses were horrible and, to this day, we are still trying to collect from some of them. By and large, however, most art houses get high marks from us—they are usually in the business because they love good movies.

Plan Ahead

Self-distribution requires a lot of lead time. Calendar houses book at least four to six months in advance, so give yourself plenty of time to pitch the movie, close the deal, and get the dates you want. Outline a strategy for release. We started out by releasing the film in New York and San Francisco. New York is *the* crucial venue. If you do not develop an audience in New York (and get some good reviews), you will probably have a hard time building momentum in other cities. In fact, if you bomb in New York, that could be the death knell for your self-distribution campaign. On the other hand, doing well in New York gives you immediate clout in the marketplace. Many theaters in the smaller markets read the ads religiously in the *Village Voice* to gauge how the independent films are faring.

If you don't want to take the calculated risk of opening in New York, you can try to begin your release in smaller cities and build toward the major markets. And if you do well, it might help you secure better venues in the bigger cities. Ultimately, though, in order to have a significant self-distribution release, you must open—and succeed—in at least one of the major markets: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and, to a lesser degree, Washington, D.C.

Festivals can be an important adjunct to your self-distribution effort. They can generate reviews before you begin your release. Those reviews, in turn, can be used to sell the picture. If your festival screening immediately precedes your release in that particular city, the festival press coverage can boost your own marketing. Be careful, however, not to get lost on the festival circuit. First of all, with the proliferation of festivals worldwide, the circuit can be a drain of time, money, and energy. Also, be aware that in some markets, the press coverage that accompanies festival screenings might eliminate all possibilities for additional coverage when you release the film theatrically at a later date. By that time, your film will be old news. So, in some markets it is better to pass on festival press coverage and to hold out for your theatrical release if the release date does not coincide with the festival dates.

Turn a Negative into a Positive

As a self-distributor you will be operating with several strikes against you before you even get started, especially if your film is a documentary. Use your ingenuity to transform those obstacles into advantages.

For instance, it is likely that you will be working with a minuscule budget, which means that paid advertising beyond the minimum level that some theaters require—especially in big cities—is prohibitive. Unless you are going to spend tons of money, most advertising is like whistling in the wind.

Many theaters require that you do some advertising with small display ads and/or by inclusion in group ads or co-op listings. But after those minimal expenditures, spend your money wisely by doing grassroots marketing, which is labor intensive, but cheap. Identify groups that will find your film interesting. For instance, we marketed *Brother's Keeper* to professional associations and community groups: from law schools to advocacy groups for older people, from psychology associations to rural organizations and civil liberty groups. Recruit some interns to pass out flyers at other theaters and to post flyers in university hangouts. Create a buzz by having friends stand in line for other movies and loudly talk up your film. The downside of grassroots marketing is that it is very labor intensive. Therefore, the number of cities you can handle at any one time will be limited, which can significantly slow down the momentum of your release.

Create lots of "homecoming" screenings—go back to your childhood town, your cinematographer's college, your leading man's summer camp—and relentlessly pursue that local angle. I grew up in Chappaqua, New York, went to Colgate University in upstate New York, and lived in Brooklyn. My parents were living in Florida. Bruce's childhood home was in Newton, Massachusetts; he attended college in Amherst; and during filming he lived in Montclair, New Jersey. That gave us seven excuses to create homecoming events surrounding our openings in those markets.

If I have not driven this point home yet, I will say it again: *press, press, and more press.* Feature articles, blurbs, photos and captions, reviews, TV appearances, radio interviews—they are all *better* than paid advertising, and they are free. Hire a publicist for the more routine tasks like setting up press screenings and distributing press kits. You should, however, make sure that you take a very active part in creating your own spin on the film. Figure out a unique, catchy angle on how your project came about. For us, it was the now overused story of weekend no-budget filmmakers financing a film on credit cards. Every film has a story—you must find it and exploit it.

Know When to Spend Money

Even though your budget is small, there are certain items that you should not skimp on: film prints, posters, and trailers.

• **Prints**: 35mm prints are more expensive than 16mm, but infinitely more useful. If you shot on 16mm, seriously consider blowing it up to 35mm (a major expenditure—about $40,000 in our case). If you try to distribute with 16mm, you are relegating yourself to a limited number of art houses—approximately 70 nationwide—which limits your potential gross. On a purely practical note, 16mm prints get damaged more easily than 35mm prints do. But, of course, a 16mm print is one-third the cost of a 35mm print.

Only strike as many prints as you will need, but do not skimp. It takes solid planning to figure out your print schedule, and you do not want to lose a date for lack of a print. Prints do get lost or delayed in shipping, so you should have one or two extras for back-up. We started out by striking 5, and then upped it in increments of 5 to 10, 15, and 30 prints. At $1,600 a pop, that is another $50,000 investment.

• **Posters**: We lost some important dates early on because we did not have good movie posters. Theaters want and expect standard-size posters, and frequently they will not book the film without them. When we first started the release, we printed half-sized posters to save money, but we quickly discovered that our cost-saving measure had actually lost us money. For instance, a prestigious theater in Providence, Rhode Island, was ready to book *Brother's Keeper* until they found out that we did not have the right size posters. We did open in New York without posters. As a result, I ran around putting together make-shift displays that did not quite look professional and needed to be redone by hand at the start of each engagement—a big waste of time.



• **Trailers**: Most theaters ask for trailers. If effective, they can be one of the best means of promoting your film. A trailer is like a free two-minute commercial shown to your target audience. By the time we realized we needed a trailer, our negative was tied up with the 35mm blow-up, so we had to act fast and creatively. It occurred to me that a testimonial from Spalding Gray might work. He had presented the Audience Award to us at Sundance, and in his speech he related an anecdote that later became the makings of our trailer. In his signature style, he explained that *Brother's Keeper* had enthralled him so much that he couldn't even leave the theater to go to the toilet despite desperately needing to pee.

So when we had to produce a trailer quickly, we contacted Spalding and asked him if he would relate the anecdote again on film. Shot in our "documentary" style in his writer's studio in the Hamptons, the trailer itself became a cult mini-film and generated its own buzz.

Develop a Thick Skin

This is as much of a life lesson as a distribution lesson: everyone says no. Therefore, do not take it personally. And perseverance pays.

As an example, we urged Karen Cooper, the head of Film Forum, to present *Brother's Keeper.* We screened the film for her in New York, and she gave us a firm no. Although that could have been the end of the story,



Better than paid advertising is free press. Here, the directors and Ward brothers get quality time on the *Maury Povich* talk show, broadcast nationally.

when the film screened at the Berlin Film Festival, we persuaded Karen to watch it again, this time with an audience. The energy of the crowd (who loved the film) convinced Karen to take it on, and as a result, *Brother's Keeper* began its theatrical life at Film Forum—in our opinion one of the very best venues in the country.

The Spectrum Theater in Albany seemed like a good bet for *Brother's Keeper*. Munnsville, New York (the village of 499 that is the locale of the film), is only 100 miles away, which gave the film a strong local appeal. The theater presents a well-balanced mix of Hollywood movies and specialized independent films. One of the owners proved to be a very nice guy, but he did not believe that *Brother's Keeper* would find an audience. We worked hard over an extended period of time to convince him that he should give the film a shot. We talked with him on the phone frequently, sent him reviews, sent box office results from other markets, and eventually he relented and agreed to book it. As it happened, Albany turned out to be one of our best cities. We played there for seven weeks, and on a per capita basis it was one of our strongest markets.

In one instance we played David to Disney's Goliath. The battle ground was the Coolidge Corner Cinema in Brookline, Massachusetts. When the theater split the screen between *Brother's Keeper* and *Aladdin*, Disney flexed its muscle and demanded that *Brother's Keeper* be pulled. (A split screen is when the theater schedules two different films at alternating times for the same screen on the same day.) For once the little guy won when Coolidge Corner stood up to Disney and refused to abandon *Brother's Keeper*.

You will run into similar battles all along the way with theater owners, managers, and bookers. Since there are more films than ever and screen space is always at a premium, other distributors ruthlessly negotiate for bookings. Theaters will sometimes treat you and your film poorly because they do not want to offend distributors who provide them with a steady flow of desirable films.

Unfortunately, many theaters will take months to pay or will never pay at all. Again, do not take it personally. Keep your cool, continue to send invoices, and make frequent phone calls.

Nothing Beats the Personal Touch

When *Brother's Keeper* opened in New York at the Film Forum, for the first three weeks Bruce and I showed up at the two main evening shows. We talked to the audience at the end of the screenings, answered questions, and exhorted them to spread the word about the film. We firmly believe that our personal appearances significantly increased interest in the film.

Some of the best moments were when we brought the stars of the film—the Ward Brothers themselves—to screenings. Because we did not want to exploit them and we feared they would not enjoy the limelight, we decided not to bring them to the New York City opening. But as the film rolled into upstate New York where the Wards had become local celebrities, the brothers themselves expressed interest in appearing at screenings within a two-hour radius of their home. Even though they did not speak much, the Wards' presence drew big audiences and made the screenings into "events." After a five-month hiatus, *Brother's Keeper* reopened in New York City, back by popular demand. By this time the Wards were enjoying their public appearances so much that we brought them to New York, giving the press a new excuse to write about the film when it otherwise would have been treated as old news.

With each personal appearance, we enhanced our marketing efforts by selling hats, T-shirts, buttons and posters. As long as they are of good quality, these items serve as excellent marketing tools, and they generate ancillary income.

Most important to remember is that the bigger markets (New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago) are not necessarily more lucrative than the smaller markets. College towns are great places for specialized films, and the college press is eager to write big feature articles if you are willing to show up in town and do a Q & A session. Treat Boise like New York City. Tender loving care in the smaller markets can result in substantial box office numbers. We earned more at the box office in Albany then we did in Los Angeles. And 20 percent of our total box-office came from the hinterlands of upstate New York where art films rarely appear, let alone do well. In the two nearest theaters to Munnsville—Oneida to the north and Hamilton to the south—*Brother's Keeper* has the all-time house record, out-grossing *E.T.*, *Star Wars*, and *Jurassic Park*.

In its 13 months of theatrical release, *Brother's Keeper* played more than 250 cities across the country and grossed nearly $1.5 million at the box office. As exhausting and challenging as it was, our self-distribution campaign allowed us to: 1) learn the distribution business inside-out; 2) get to know our audiences directly—a unique and fulfilling experience; and 3) earn a respectable profit through our own hard work. We often wonder what kind of business *Brother's Keeper* would have done in the care of one of the major independent distributors (e.g., Miramax, Fine Line, Goldwyn) with their infinitely larger P&A (prints and advertising) budgets. But, while more established distributors might have gotten higher grosses, they probably would not have marketed the film with as much enthusiasm, determination, or ingenuity as we did.

Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's next nonfiction feature, Paradise Lost:The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills, *will be screened at Sundance 1996. The filmmakers plan once again to self-distribute the film theatrically after its June premiere on HBO.*

This article is reprinted from *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Film and Video*, edited by Morrie Warshawski and available through its publisher, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film [see page 17 for book orders].

An upcoming issue of *The Independent* will feature the essay "Stepping Out: The Art of Publicity," by film publicist Karen Larsen, also from *The Next Step*. From soup to nuts, Larsen details what's needed to develop, budget, and carry out an effective publicity campaign for a film launch.

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BY ROB ROWND



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Courtesy Data Translation

The Dream Machine

THE DREAM MACHINE IS A BOX THAT SITS ON A desk in the back of my mind, spitting out edited, broadcast-quality video and freeing me from having to beg for low-cost editing time. With this mythical device I never have to stop editing personal projects to write grants for completion funds or watch my profits from a commercial job go up in smoke as a client ponders a 30-frame dissolve. This imaginary machine would join the SRII and the Nagra package as the third leg of true independent production. I could make the payments on it for the cost of one day of on-line time a month; I would be able to charge more for my work and keep the costs in-house; and best of all, since it would sit next to the fax machine in the room off the kitchen, I could roll out of bed at 3:00 a.m. and try out that great new idea for scene 28.

The Real Machine

The Media 100 V2.0 from Data Translation, running on a Power Mac 8100, comes pretty close to making the dream a reality. The two boards that digitize the video and audio information install in about an hour. Just watch the 45-minute instructional videotape a couple of times, hose in either composite, component, or S-video, and all the basic commands can be learned in an afternoon.

The Software

The simple intuitive interface looks like a standard off-line editing bay: preview monitor on the top left, program monitor on the top right. A series of windows displaying clip bins, time lines, four tracks of audio, and transitions can be opened and closed along the bottom third of the screen.

Like all good Mac software, Media 100 provides the user with multiple ways to give commands. Using the mouse, the editor can find the standard editing terms in the scroll-down menus. When this method becomes too time-consuming, pick up the manual and find the function key equivalents. (The exhaustive manuals aren't quite as dry as the ones that arrive with a new stereo, but aside from the tutorial, their utility is pretty much limited to hunting for command sequences you can't figure out otherwise.) Fortunately the learning curve on the program is shallow from start to finish. Even for someone whose computer know-how is limited to a handful of well-known programs, after one session the Media 100 is faster than off-lining with a tape-based system. After three sessions it's much faster still.

A hidden advantage of digital editing is that once images and sound are loaded onto a hard drive, they are locked in place. The NTSC corkscrew (a holdover from the transition of black-and-white to color television, in which

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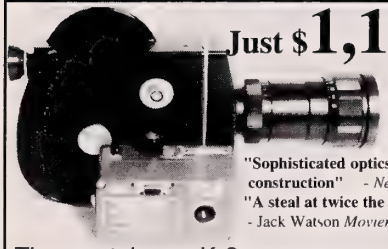
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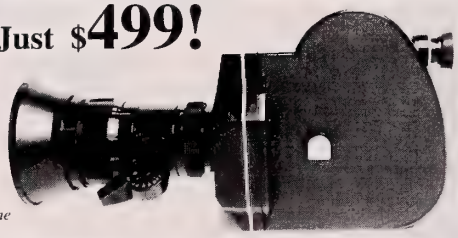
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the color picture information is wrapped around the black-and-white picture information to yield an unruly and fickle signal) stays put as a series of digital 1s and 0s that don't shift in color or brightness. As a result, you spend your time editing rather then tweaking TBCs (Time Base Correctors) and juggling sound levels in a tedious attempt to match a previous edit session. This may seem like the computer equivalent of an auto iris to the more digitally inclined, but this absence of technical worries allows one to concentrate on the content of images and sounds themselves and pushes the editing process further into the right-brain hemisphere.

While some of this increased speed is the nature of the digital beast plus increased proficiency with the command vocabulary, a larger part comes from the organizing tools incorporated into the software. The video and audio clips entered into the machine are identified by single frames of video or waveforms of audio which resemble the preview thumbnails of Adobe PhotoShop or Illustrator. These clips can be identified by short narrative descriptions and timecode numbers and then assigned one of five colors. By combining a multiple sizing option with a malleable color coding feature, it is easy to look at a lot of footage a lot of different ways in a short amount of time. These features don't negate the need to bang four or five shots together and see what happens, but they make it very easy first to locate the keeper takes, arranging those into sections, and then to organize the sections into types of shots and audio clips, all done without log sheets, post-it notes, or squinting around the edges of the timecode box of a window dub. In addition to speeding up the manual tasks of editing, Media 100 helps speed up the thought process as well.

Another key advantage of the Media 100 software is the ease with which one can shift between different compression rates and image qualities. Better pictures require larger files, which in turn require more space on your hard drive. With Media 100, broadcast-quality images can be stored at about three-and-a-half minutes per gigabyte. At this rate, a four- to five-gig hard drive gives you more than enough room to fine-cut a music video, commercial, standard-length corporate piece, or 10-minute short. (It's nowhere near enough space to deal with four cores' worth of dailies or even a 30-minute Betacam SP cassette, however.) Media 100 allows you to

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save footage in a draft mode (which looks about the same as VHS) at 20 to 28 minutes per gigabyte, depending on the amount of audio information included. Once the draft mode footage is rough cut, you can redigitize the selected takes at broadcast quality and have the machine do a frame-accurate recut. If all the camera original is on one cassette, you can even leave the room while the machine is working. This is a big advantage for cost-conscious consumers.

For all the benefits of the basic and intermediate functions of the program, there is a slight reluctance on the part of more sophisticated users to declare the Media 100 a perfect tool. Many animators and online editors agree that the $40,000 Media 100 had much better picture quality than the $70,000 Avid 900. Furthermore, animators rave about Media 100's real-time rendering capability.

However, the program is a little cumbersome in its advanced applications. Patrick Seimer of Chicago's H-Gun Media Labs sums up the general feeling that the Media 100 is somehow "less elegant to drive than the Avid." The difference between the two is most often described in organic terms. The Avid software is currently the sixth version of the original (Avid 900 v6.0). The Media 100 is in its second incarnation (Media 100 v2.0). With a four-generation head start, the Avid has had some time to grow into itself and become comfortable following some complicated commands. By contrast, the Media 100 is a young program and lacks a certain refined grace under fire.

In response to these mild criticisms from high-end users, Data Translation recently released version 2.5 of the Media 100 software. The upgrade is more supple than version 2.0 and has incorporated real-time color effects that are great fun but still require an animator's level of patience to fine-tune beyond the presets. Perhaps the best thing about the new version is what it says about the manufacturer. Data Translation listened to customer complaints, then went out and made some, if not all, of the appropriate changes. If you spend $3,000 on their Platinum Technical Support Deal, version 2.5 and all subsequent upgrades are free.

The Hardware

As glowing as the review of this software is, the system environment on which it runs is still a bit murky. Just nine months after Data Translation released Version 2.0 of the Media 100, Apple replaced the Power Macintosh (PM) 8100 with three newer, faster models. Unfortunately, the Media 100 boards that fit in the 8100 won't work in the new machines.

A dilemma for consumers, there is nonetheless a good reason for the change in configurations: a computer is only as fast as its slowest component. In the case of the first generation of Power Macs and the Quadra line of 68040 machines, the bottleneck lies in the Nubus architecture of the expansion slots holding the boards that digitize video and audio and drive the Media 100 software. Nubus is based on technology implemented in 1990 and allows information to enter the machine in 32-bit chunks. While these chunks enter the machine at well nigh the speed of light, the width of these chunks determines the quality of the input. The PCI system, which replaced Nubus in the Power Mac 7500, 8500, and 9500, features a 64-bit architecture. Wider chunks of picture information can move through the machine at a given point in time. The 7500, 8500, and 9500 are priced according to speed, so you get what you pay for.

Data Translation has chosen to deal with this situation by offering a version of the Media 100 for both Nubus and PCI architectures. Both versions are available as incremental modules that range in price from $9,000 for the entry level system to $24,000 for the whole-deal package, with the ability to input and output component video. This upgradeable system has also been devised to function with variable amounts of RAM and hard drive space. A decent Power Mac 8100- or 7500-based entry level system will set you back between $8,500 and $9,000 for the hardware (with 48 megs of RAM and a four to five gigabyte 7200 spin hard-drive) and video support (NTSC monitor and speakers). The same system on a Power Mac 8500 and 9500 runs about $1,000 and $2,000 more, respectively, but to take full advantage of the increased speed, you need to increase your RAM to 80 megs (another $1,000) and get an eight to 10 gigabyte disk array. (A collection of hard drives that the computer thinks is one drive will cost about $6,000.)

Alternatives to official Macintosh hardware are available, now that Apple has licensed its operating system to other manufacturers. As of this writing, Power Computing, Prism Technology, and Radius are offering mail-order-only clones of the 8100 that can be customized as platforms for the Media 100. More choices will surely follow. If they live up to their specs,

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all three would be a improvement on the PM 8100, but due to the inherent limitatios of Nubus architecture, they probably won't be as versatile or as fast as the 8500 or 9500.

Low Cost Little Brother

Just as this article was going to press, Data Translation announced plans to bundle their custom PCI Video Card, the Vincent, with Adobe Premier 4.2 for under $5,000. This low-cost introduction to digital video will be named Media 100 qx and will be the first PCI device designed for Quicktime users. Premier is not great software compared to the Avid, Media 100, or even Cosa After Effects. However, running out of the same card that drives the Media 100 on a PCI machine, it should provide the same high quality video and audio that put Media 100 on the map with a reasonable rendering speed. Since it is untested, the strongest praise I can give for the product is that it contains the exact same board that works so well with the Media 100. Also, Data Translation will offer a software-only upgrade path to the Media 100 that makes the Vincent-Premier bundle worth consideration sight unseen.

Endnote

The Media 100 v2.0 and the recently released v2.5 are both great cost-effective nonlinear digital editing systems for the Power Mac. The young, robust software is perhaps a bit inelegant for the most sophisticated users, but the proprietary digitizing hardware delivers unrivaled picture quality in real-time. The current versions are both native to the Power Mac, and the improvements in the recent upgrade should make it more attractive to high-end users.

Furthermore, the commonsense solutions, candor, and superb technical support offered by Data Translations suggest that the advanced operating features will continue to improve with subsequent software upgrades. Given the speed advantages of PCI over Nubus, the second generations of Power Macs are worth the additional expense to anyone intending to expand their nonlinear editing system as this technology evolves, even if it means upgrading the modular Media 100 package in stages rather than buying the complete system as one piece.

Rob Rownd (rhrjr@delphi.com) is a writer and filmmaker living in Chicago.

Cue & A

With Jonathan Stack

The lives of a number of Harlem youths are intimately portrayed in Jonathan Stack's **Harlem Diary: Nine Voices of Resilience** *(35 mm, 96 min.). The filmmaker, a one-time Harlem resident, was inspired by the work of sociologist Terry Williams, who had a group of Harlem kids document their experiences in personal journals, subsequently published in his book* The Uptown Kids: Struggle and Hope in the Projects. *Joining up with Williams, Stack chose to expand on this work by putting video cameras in the hands of the subjects and allowing them to directly articulate the ways in which they had met the challenges of growing up in Harlem. Stack, the producer of the Emmy-award winning documentary on censorship* Damned in the USA, *was fortunate enough to land a production agreement with the Discovery Channel for this project, his first as director. The film will air on the channel on February 27, following a theatrical release.*

Harlem Diary, *Jonathan Stack, Gabriel Films, 457 Washington St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-6200, fax (212) 941-6203.*



Jonathan Stack (right) and the subjects of his documentary *Harlem Diary*, financed by the Discovery Channel.

Q: How did the Discovery Channel come to be involved with the *Harlem Diary* project?

A: Discovery president Greg Moyer was interested in setting up some informal meetings to build relationships with independent filmmakers. Janet Carlson, Discovery's director of acquisitions and development, contacted me because we'd worked together previously at the Margaret Mead Film Festival. Moyer met with Terry Williams and me for dinner one evening, and the offer of support came immediately; the project was greenlit, in principle, by the end of the meal.

Q: What kind of support did the Discovery Channel give you?

A: It was exactly what you would hope for: For someone to believe in you and give you the resources to realize your dream as best you are able. If there are any problems with *Harlem Diary*, I can only blame myself, because I had complete control over the project. They supported and encouraged the kind of work I was doing, even though it took considerably longer than a normal television production schedule permits; they allowed us more than two years, because we needed that time, and they had made the commitment to support our work.

Q: What kind of funding did Discovery give you, and what kind of control did you have over the budget?

A: I can't divulge the specific dollar amount of the budget, but it was a good level of funding for this kind of film. It's not like there's endless amounts of money, but they were quite flexible. So much of this has to do with the relationship you develop with the sponsor: If they trust you, you have more freedom. They trusted I was doing all I could, so nobody was on me about any wrong choices I made. The key was to deliver, which I did.

Q: Did you retain control over the final cut?

A: This is bizarre: The only restriction was in length, but that's always the case. In terms of the creative aspects, I was ultimately responsible for every point. I don't know if I'll ever have a situation like that again. It was so terrific it's almost strange. This was the first film I'd ever directed, and on a documentary especially there are so many unpredictable variables. That makes it all very exciting, but to do your best work you need the freedom to make mistakes and the flexibility to take risks. In this case I was lucky—I'd even say blessed—to have that.

Q: What kind of theatrical release terms did Discovery give you?

A: *Harlem Diary* was initially conceived as a television project, so a theatrical release was not our first impulse. But when they realized how the film truly *mattered*, how it could be used as a tool to help the community, they agreed with me that it would be worthwhile to create a film print for theatrical release. They went out of their way for this extra step, setting up a Los Angeles premiere screening to benefit a South Central L.A. teen leadership organization.

Q: How else have they worked to get the film into the community?

A: After a premiere at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, the film has continued to play at the Victoria there. We've also started showing the film at halfway houses, community centers, and schools with some of the participants present, and the reception has been terrific, uplifting. You can see that there's a real use for it. Discovery is also licensing rights back to me for future screenings at schools and other community venues, so the film will be able to go beyond just showing on television, which can be frustrating.

Q: Were you able to retain copyright control?

A: No. I think it'll become harder and harder to retain rights, because there's a new understanding that recorded images have potential long-term value, and that's where the profit may lie. As long as you want to get someone to fund your project, it may be tough to hold on to the rights.

Q: What suggestions do you have for filmmakers considering similar kinds of funding?

A: Don't simply assume a given network is not into what you want to do. Try it out on them, because it just might interest them. At least let them say no; don't let your perception of the circumstances limit your options. In any event, you will need to be patient and persistent, because it takes a long time.

—*Adam Knee*



BY KATHRYN BOWSER

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DOMESTIC

ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL, March 12-17, MI. All cats & genres in ind. filmmaking are eligible for 34th edition of Ann Arbor: doc, animation, experimental, narrative. $9,000 in cash prizes awarded. Awarded films & highlights are programmed into 4 hr program that tours colleges & film showplaces across U.S. for 4 mos. following fest, w/ rental fee of $1/min. per tour stop. Entry fee: $32. Format: 16mm (no video accepted for prescreening). Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: Ann Arbor Film Festival, Box 8232, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (313) 995-5356; fax: 5396; e-mail: vicki@honeyman.org.

ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY. Sponsored by Asian CineVision, NYC-based nat'l media arts center, this noncompetitive fest, created in 1977, is country's oldest showcase for works by Asian & Asian American filmmakers. Fest seeks to heighten understanding & appreciation of Asian & Asian American cinema art. After its NY premiere, fest embarks on 10-month tour of N. America. Films produced, directed &/or written by artists of Asian heritage eligible. Features & shorts in all cats accepted. Entries must have been originally produced on film; no video-to-film transfers accepted. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: none. Deadline: early March. Contact: Festival Director, Asian American International Film Festival, Asian Cine Vision, 32 East Broadway, 4th fl., New York, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685; fax: 8157.

ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 26-May 2, OH. 23rd edition of fest focuses on ind. film & video. Fest looks for works "that evidence a high regard for artistic innovation, sensitivity to content & personal involvement with the medium." Entries prescreened by committee comprised of filmmakers, videomakers & other artists associated w/ Athens Center for Film & Video. Cash prizes awarded to competition winners in each cat; cats incl narrative (traditional & experimental), doc (traditional & experimental), experimental & animation. Entry fee: $25 plus pre-paid return shipping/insurance. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 12. Contact: Athens International Film & Video Fesetival, Athens Center for Film & Video, Box 388, Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-1330; fax: (614) 593-1328; e-mail: rbradley1@ohiou.edu.

BIG MUDDY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, late Feb./early March, IL. Founded in 1978, this competitive fest for ind. film & video is organized & run by students & provides ind. film/videomakers w/ opportunity to present works "that challenge traditional boundaries of visual media." 3 ind. filmmakers present their works & serve as judges, awarding $3,000 in cash prizes. Approx 70 entries (chosen from annual entries of 200-280) are in official competition. Entries must have been completed after Dec. of preceding 2 yrs. Special community outreach program incl. screenings at detention centers, nursing homes, women's shelters, schools, etc. Formats accepted: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $30-40. Deadline: early Feb. Contact: Fest Director, Big Muddy Film and Video Festival, Dept. of Cinema & Photography, Mailcode 6610, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901; (618) 453-1482; fax: (618) 453-1005.

CAROLINA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 3-6, NC. Held at U of North Carolina, fest, now in its 6th yr, has goal of showcasing best student & ind. film and video in all genres, incl. animation, doc, experimental & narrative, as well as works that cross cat boundaries. Last yr, 49 works were screened in competition. This yr's awards expected to match or exceed $2,500 in cash and Kodak filmstock. A non-refundable handling fee of $20 for students and $30 for independents required per entry. To receive full consideration, entry form, work & fee must be received no later than Feb 15. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Contact: Shane Nye, Carolina Film and Video Festival, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Building, UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax: (910) 334-5039.

CHARLOTTE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May, NC. Competitive fest "seeks to foster & encourage art of ind. film & video makers, especially those with unique point of view." Ind film & videomakers working in US eligible for fest, which awards $7,000 in cash prizes About 50 works (9% of the entries) are screened, & all accepted work is paid cash. Features & shorts completed since Jan. 1 of previous 3 yrs accepted. Cats: doc, narrative, experimental & animated. Exhibition sites incl. Mint Museum of Art, Spirit Square Center for Arts & Education, Afro-American Cultural Center, Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, the Light Factory Photographic Arts Center & the Manor Theater. *Choice Cuts*, traveling exhibit of work selected from fest, goes to selected venues in US; filmmakers whose work is chosen receive rental fees for each additional screening. Formats : 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, CD-ROM. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: early March. Contact: Robert West, director, Charlotte Film & Video Festival, Mint Museum of Art, 2730 Randolph Road, Charlotte, NC 28207; (704) 337-2019; fax: (704) 337-2101; e-mail: mintfilm@aol.com.

CINE ANNUAL GOLDEN EAGLE FILM AND VIDEO COMPETITION, August, DC. CINE competition for nontheatrical films & videos (except TV ads & spot announcements) now entering 36th yr. Golden Eagles awarded in amateur, agriculture, economic development, animation, children's films, art, business/industry, doc, education, entertainment, shorts, feature (made for TV), music, environment, history, medicine, motivational, news, people, public affairs, public health, science, sports & travel cats. Entries must be U.S. productions. Award winners entered in foreign festivals & also eligible for Academy Awards nominations. Entries judged by various juries comprising over 700 film/video professionals. Entrants should send application and entry fee first and send tapes when instructed. Formats accepted: 1/2". Entry fee: $45-75 amateur/$100+ professional. Deadline: early Feb. Contact: Joy Parisi, director, CINE Competition, CINE-Council on International Non-Theatrical Events, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, ste. 638, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 785-1136; fax: 4114.

FIRSTGLANCE 2: PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, PA. Fest billed as "Philadelphia's original underground festival" is in 2nd yr. Mission is "to bring together the best & brightest young film & video makers to exhibit their work to the community in a festival atmosphere." Fest is 5-day multiple venue event; highlights incl. student film competition judged by TV & film professionals, gala 1st night benefit. Cats incl. doc, narrative, animation, music video & experimental; 10 sec.- to feature-length works accepted. Contact: Sharon Pinkenson, Firstglance 2, Greater Philadelphia Film Office, 1600 Arch St., 12th Fl., Philadelphia, PA 19103; (215) 686-2668; fax: (215) 686-3659.

FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL, June, FL. 10 day event featuring American ind. films (feature, short, doc, narrative, experimental, animation), seminars, Florida student competition, celebrations & special guests. Held at Enzian Theatre, major ind. nonprofit cinema & media arts center, fest has evolved from exhibition-only fest to juried competition. In each cat there is Jury Award, Audience Award & 1 other award at jury's discretion. Entries must have at least 51% US funding. Features must be 60 min. or more; shorts under 10 min. Video accepted for animation & student competition only. Fest also sponsors several curated sidebars, special events, seminars, workshops & receptions. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $15-$30. Deadline: early March. Contact: Sigrid Tiedtke, executive director, Florida Film Festival, Enzian Theatre, 1300 S. Orlando Avenue, Maitland, FL 32571; (407) 629-1068; fax: 6870;
e-mail: filmfesti@gate.net. WWW: http://www.

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HOMETOWN VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, CA. Sponsored by Alliance for Community Media (formerly National Federation of Local Cable Programmers), a national, nonprofit membership organization committed to assuring access to electronic media, this competitive fest, begun in 1977, recognizes outstanding local program produced for/by local orgs & PEG access operations. In 1995, fest received over 1,750 entries from US & Canada. Awards: 4 special awards for overall excellence in PEG local origination programming; finalists, honorable mentions & winners in 36 categories. Some cats: performing arts; ethnic expression; entertainment; sports; by/for youth; live; municipal; religious; educational; instructional/training; informational; innovative; international; by/for senior citizens; PSA; doc; profile/event/public awareness; video art; music video; local news; magazine format; original teleplay. Entries must have been produced w/ in previous yr. Awards ceremony held during Int'l Conference Trade Show of Alliance for Community Media. Formats accepted: 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $20-$50. Contact: Randy Van Dalsen, Hometown Video Festival, The Buske Group, 3001 J Street, Ste 201, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 441-6277; fax: 7670.

HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL/WORLDFEST-HOUSTON, April, TX. Large fest w/ many competition cats. New Remi Award is the Grand Prize of Worldfest, going to top festival winners. Associated film & video market for features, shorts, doc, video ind./experimental & TV productions ($300 entry fee). Student Awards Program offers $2,500 cash award for grand prize & $500 cash award for best student film in each cat of high school, college & graduate. Scripts & screenplays also have competition cat. Cats: theatrical features (animated, doc, comedy, dramatic, fantasy/horror, first feature, foreign, ind., low budget, major studio/distributor, out of competition, feature made for tape/cable release); TV & Video Production (animated, analysis/background of single current news story, continuing news story coverage, feature made for TV, individual on camera talent, ind. video, cultural/historical information segment or program, interviews, investigative journalism, local public service, local TV programming, news and doc program-directing, editing/graphics, videography, research/writing, pilots, program/individual/technical achievements, public affairs, religious, TV series & specials); Film & Video Production (advertising, agriculture, arts/culture, biographical/autobiographical, children's corporate image/orientation, doc, ecology/environment/conservation, educational children & adult, ethnic/cultural, flight/space travel, fundraising, instructional, history/archaeology, human sexuality, industrial/technical, inhouse productions, insurance, leisure/recreation, medical/ health/fitness, substance abuse, medical, motivational, nature/wildlife, nuclear/energy issues, performance arts, political/international issues, public relations, public service, public health, recruiting/career guidance, religion/ethics, safety/first aid, sailing/watesports, sales/marketing, scientific/research, social/economic issues, sports, travel, training, underwater/marine science, women's



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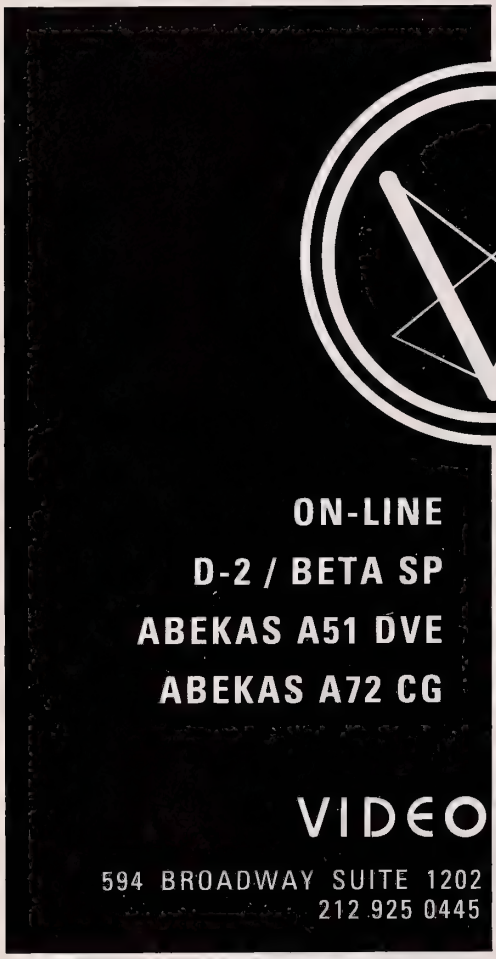
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FESTIVALS

issues); short subjects films & videos; TV commercials; experimental films & videos; filmstrips/slide/multimedia programs; student films & videos; super 8mm film & videos; screenplays; music videos; new media; print advertising awards; radio advertising awards.. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8 (on videotape). Entry fee: $50-$200. Deadline: early March. Contact: J. Hunter Todd, festival director, Houston International Film and Video Festival/Worldfest-Houston, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77256; (713) 965-9955/(800) 524-1438; fax: (713) 965-9960.

IMAGES ON THE CAPE FEAR, March 22-23, NC. Fest shows work on 35mm, 16mm, super 8 & video. Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Feb. 23. Contact: Twinkle Doon, 4326 Market St., ste. 174, Wilmington, NC 28403; (910) 251-7667.

MIDWEST INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL, April, IL. 2nd edition of juried fest which seeks to bring the art of doc filmmaking to wider audience. Fest co-sponsored by Columbia College & IDA & includes screenings & panel discussions. Certificates of Merit awarded; student entries encouraged. Entry fee: $10. Formats: Hi8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: Midwest International Documentary Festival, c/o Documentary Festival, 600 S. Michigan, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 663-1600 x5306 or x5788.

MONITOR AWARDS, October, NY. Sponsored by Int'l Teleproduction Society, this competition honors excellence in electronic production & post-production. Cats & craft areas incl TV series; TV specials; theatrical releases; music video; national commercials; local commercials; promotions; children's programming; sports; docs; short subjects; show reels; corporate communication; opens, closes and titles; transitions; logos & IDs. Awards: best achievement honors to producers, directors, editors, etc. in each cat. Entries must have been produced or postproduced w/in previous calendar yr & entries originating on film must be postproduced electronically. Formats accepted: 3/4". Entry fee: $130-$170. Deadline: Early Feb. Contact: Julia Hammer, International Monitor Awards, 350 5th Avenue, Ste. 2400, New York, NY 10118; (212) 629-3266; fax: 3265.

NATIVE AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, April, NY. Showcases best new ind, doc & animated works produced by & about Native Americans & Native Hawaiians. 1995 festival featured film, video and radio works produced since 1992 from North, Central and Latin America & Hawaii. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on cassette. Entry fee: none. Deadline: early March. Contact: Erica C. Wortham, Native American Film and Video Festival, Film and Video Center of the National Museum of the American Indian, George Gustav Heye Center, One Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004; (212) 825-6894; fax: 8180.

NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, NY. Noncompetitive fest aims to present latest in electronic arts. Over past yrs, High Definition TV & CD-ROM work have been presented in addition to video. Originally presented as a special event of the New York Film Festival since 1992, this year an ind.

project that will take place in conjunction w/ Lincoln Center Festival '96. All videos shown single channel, projected in Film Society's 268 seat Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center. No cats/no awards. Average of 44 works presented in 14 programs & over 3,600 attend. There is coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*, and some out-of-town and international coverage. Submitted works should be recent (w/in past 2 years); NY premieres preferred but not required. Formats accepted: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, CD-ROM, HDTV; preview on 3/4", 1/2", CD-ROM. Entry fee: none. Deadline: early March. Contact: Marian Masone, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023; (212) 875-5610; fax: 5636; e-mail: masonem@aol.com.

RETIREMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION NATIONAL MEDIA OWL AWARDS, May 15, IL. Competitive fest for outstanding films, video & TV series "that address aging issues, capture images of older persons & illuminate challenge & promise of an aging society." Entries must deal w/ concerns of aged or those workin in field. Cats: ind. films, TV nonfiction & training/educational awards: 1st prize $5,000, bronze statuette; 2nd prize $2,000 & plaque; honorable mentions $1,000 & plaques; community video award (TV nonfiction only) $2,000 & statuette. Entries must have been produced in US & released or initially copyrighted during 1995. No entry fee. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Ray Bradford, project director, National Media Owl Awards, Retirement Research Foundation, 1440 N. Dayton St., Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 951-0678; fax: 5717.

RIVERTOWN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April, MN. Estab. in 1983, this non-competitive fest of fests, sponsored by Univ. of Minnesota Film Society/Minnesota Film Center, annually presents more than 100 feature films from over 35 countries, as well as number of shorts. Programs held at various venues throughout Twin Cities. Fest now largest fest in Upper-Midwest region. Program incl features, selected shorts or featurettes, contemporary int'l films, US ind. film work (incl. Emerging Filmmakers jury competition & Screenwriters Workshops); different nat'l cinema each yr & commercial features for opening & closing. Schedule incl. some US premieres & occasional world premieres, as well as largest group of Scandinavian film titles in any US fest & showcases focus on films from Eastern European countries. Votes cast for "Best of Fest" in several cats, incl. feature, short & doc; winners are based on audience poll. Limited funds available for transportation & accommodations of directors. World Wide Web: http://www.umn.edu/nlhome/g023/filmsoc/ufilm.html. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: mid-Feb. Contact: Al Milgrom, fest director/Bob Strong, fest coordinator, Rivertown International Film Festival, University of Minnesota Film Society, Minnesota Film Center, 425 Ontario Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4431; fax: 1111; e-mail: filmsoc@gold.tc.umn.edu.

ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May, NY. Sponsored by Movies on a Shoestring, group of western New York film buffs, fest was founded in 1959 & is open to films & videos of all genres. Out of about 140 entries each year, fest programs 24 entries (8 screenings a night). Entries should be under 40 min. Awards incl. Certificates of Merit, Honorable Mentions & Shoestring Trophy. Held at the International Museum of Film & Photography in Rochester. Selected films from each year's festival bought for nonprofit traveling collection "Best of Festival" program, which travels New York State. Formats accepted: 16mm, super 8, 1/2". Entry fee: $20. Deadline: early March. Contact: Josephine Perini, Rochester International Film Festival, Movies on a Shoestring, Inc., PO Box 17746, Rochester, NY 14617; (716) 288-5607.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, CA. Founded in 1976, this is one of world's largest & oldest events of its kind, "committed to showcasing the best & most diverse work by or about lesbians & gay men." Many works premiered in fest go on to be programmed or distributed nationally & internationally. In prescreening process, 3 ind, diverse screening committees review submissions from Nov.-March, accepting works at ratio of 1:3. Rough cuts & working versions of unfinished work accepted for preview if submitted on 3/4" or 1/2". Festival especially encourages applications from women & people of color. Entries must be San Francisco Bay Area premieres. Awards: Frameline Award, Audience Award, Absolut Auteur Award. Fest produced by Frameline, nonprofit arts organization dedicated to exhibition, distribution, funding & promotion of lesbian & gay media arts. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", multimedia, installations. Entry fee: $20. Deadline: late Feb. Contact: Boone Nguyen, director of programming, San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film & Video Festival, Frameline, 346 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8658; fax: (415) 861-1404.

SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Mid May/Early June, WA. Founded in 1974, fest is 1 of largest non-competitive festivals in US, presenting more than 160 features & 75 short films to audience of over 100,000 filmgoers each yr. Known for its eclectic programming which encompasses all genres & styles from latest in contemporary world cinema to premieres of American ind. & major studio releases. Special programs include New Directors Film Showcase, Independent Filmmakers Forum, Golden Space Needle Awards given in cats of feature film, director, actress, actor, doc & short story. Presentation at fest qualifies participants for entry in Independent Feature Project's Independent Spirit Awards. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Deadline: early March. Contact: Carl Spence, Seattle International Film Festival, Egyptian Theater, 801 E. Pine Street, Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 324-9996; fax: 9998; e-mail: cinemaseattle@film.com.

SILVER IMAGES FILM FESTIVAL, May 16-18, IL. This fest, now in its 3rd edition, programs selection of best int'l & US films & videos—narrative, doc, experimental—that "honor and celebrate the lives of older adults." Filmmakers of all ages encouraged to enter work; fest especially encourages filmmakers 65 and older to enter (these films do not nec-

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essarily have to concern aging or older adults). Fest held in several venues throughout Chicago & is publicized in local & national media. Events incl opening night gala, screenings for older adult groups, screenings for gerontology professions & public screenings. Fest is noncompetitive except for Visionary Award, given to int'l or American feature film chosen for its exemplary portrayal of older adults. Deadline: Jan. 15 (extensions given). Contact: Becky Cowing, Silver Images Film Festival, Terra Nova Films, 9848 S. Winchester Ave., Chicago, IL 60643; (312) 881-8491; fax: (312) 881-3368.

SLICE OF LIFE FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, July 12 & 14, PA. Held at Penn State Univ., 14th annual edition of Slice of Life features competitively chosen observational doc films & videos, incl. those using experimental techniques. Fest "brings high-quality doc work from around the coutnry to large, intelligent, appreciative central PA audiences." Narrative works & works longer than 30 min. not accepted; shorter entries encouraged. Fest screening happens twice, same show. Winners' producers receive cash prize & certificate. Entry fee: $25. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 16mm & 1/2". Deadline: April 1. Contact: Sedgwick Heskett, director, Documentary Resource Center, 106 Boalsburg Rd., P.O. Box 909, Lemont, PA 16851; (814) 234-1945; fax: (814) 234-0939.

SOUTH FLORIDA BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, April, FL. One week event showcasing feature films & shorts in Miami & S. Florida area. Films fall under headings of *Africa Night, Independent Features, International Night, Black Women Make Movies, Classics* and *Shorts*. Each yr featured guest dialogues w/ audience about film industry. Oscar Micheaux Award Competition recognizes best video produced by student at local college. Founded in 1989, fest is invitational & showcases about 16 films each yr. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: none. Deadline: early Feb. Contact: Monica Freeman, executive director, South Florida Black Film Festival, 5787 W. Sunrise Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33311; ph./fax (305) 571-9754.

TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL, April, NM. A multicultural celebration of cinema artists, their art and its audience. In conjunction w/ Conference on Media Literacy, fest serves as a rendezvous where people meet to trade ideas & inspiration in an atmosphere conducive to clear conscientious thought—a unique context in which to view & discuss art of film & ways in which media shape our lives. Focus of fest includes the best in new ind. films, media literacy, Native American & Latino filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video & multimedia. All lengths & genres. Entry fees from $15-$25. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Kelly Clement, Events Director. Submissions must be on 1/2" VHS. For entry forms send SASE to: Taos Talking Pictures, 216M N. Pueblo Rd., #216, Taos, NM 87571; taosfilm@laplaza.taos.nm.us.

USA FILM FESTIVAL, April, TX. Fest has 3 major components: noncompetitive feature section (now in 25th yr); National Short Film & Video Competition (in 17th yr); & KidFilm (held in mid Jan, for new and classic live and animated features and shorts). Feature section programmed by artistic director & incl premieres of major new films, new works from ind. & emerging filmmakers, special film tributes, incl Great Director award & retrospective, panel discussions w/ filmmakers from around world. To enter, send preview cassette w/ publicity & production info. Short film & video competition showcases new & significant US work. Entries should be under 60 min., completed after Jan. 1 of the preceding yr. Cash prizes awarded in cats of narrative (fiction, dramatized events & adaptations of literary or dramatic works - $1,000); nonfiction (docs or portraits of actual persons or events - $1,000); animation (incl animation of graphics or 3D objects - $1,000); experimental (works that explore personal experience or film & video forms in innovative ways & can employ elements of animation, narrative or doc - $1,000); Texas Award ($500); Student Award ($500); advertising/promo award (music videos, industrials, commercials, PSAs or other commissioned work exhibiting creativity & innovation); Family Award (dedicated to Charles Samu) of $500; 4 special jury awards ($250). Grand Prize Winner flown to Dallas to receive cash & award & present winning film/video. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $40. Deadline: early March. Contact: Alonso Duralde, artistic director/Ann Alexander, managing director, USA Film Festival, 2917 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, TX 75204; (214) 821-6300; fax: 6364.

WASHINGTON DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Late April/early May, DC. Ninth season of this fest, which brings "best in new world cinema" to nation's capitol. Known as Filmfest DC, fest is noncompetitive, presenting over 60 feature premieres, restored classics & special events. All Filmfest presentations are Washington, DC premieres & programming consists of fiction, doc, animation, family & children's programs, educational panels & workshops. Festival "attempts to represent the broad geographical diversity of world cinema–the newest films of emerging countries and the latest work from newly recognized young directors." Attendance last edition totaled over 22,000; fest is District-wide event which brings together city's major cultural institutions, incl. Smithsonian Institution (Public Services Program & Hirshhorn Museum), Library of Congress, American Film Institute, Black Film Institute, University of the District of Columbia, DC Public Library, National Archives & commercial movie theaters. Films shown throughout the city & several events presented free of charge. Special programs include Filmfest DC for Kids, series of family-oriented programs in libraries, hospitals & community centers; Global Rhythms, series of music films; & Cinema for Seniors. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $30 features, $15 shorts. Deadline: early Feb. Contact: Tony Gittens, fest director, Washington DC International Film Festival, P.O. Box 21396, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 274-6810; fax: (202) 274-6828; filmfestdc@ aol.com.

FOREIGN

BANFF TELEVISION FESTIVAL, June, Canada. Founded in 1979, fest has 3 components: int'l program competition, which awards coveted TV prize, the Banff Rockies; conference for TV professionals w/ important resource people; & informal environment in which to develop business relationships. Cats: TV features, limited series, continuing series, short dramas, TV comedies, social/political docs, popular science programs, arts docs, performance specials & children's programs. Competition entries must be made for TV (films in theatrical release ineligible). Entries originally in English or French must have TV premiere after March of preceding yr. Producers of best programs in each of 12 cats receive "Rockies" sculptures. Grand Prize, incl $5,000 Cdn. awarded to film or program judged Best of Fest. Jury may also make 2 Special Awards, incl $2,500 Cdn. for outstanding achievements. "On demand" screening facilities for all TV programs invited or submitted to fest, in or out of competition. Formats accepted: 3/4". Entry fee: $200. Deadline: early Feb. Contact: Jerry Ezekiel, president/fest director, Banff Television Festival, The Banff Centre, 204 Caribou Street, #306, Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0; (403) 762-3060; fax: (403) 762-5357.

CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May, France. Cannes is largest and most well-known int'l film fest, attended by over 35,000 guests, incl. stars, directors, distributors, buyers & journalists. Intensive round-the-clock screenings, parties, ceremonies, press conferences & one of world's largest film markets are fest hallmarks. Screening or award at Cannes can provide fame & prestige. Selection committee, appointed by Administration Board, chooses entries for Official Competition (about 20 films) and for *Un Certain Regard* section. Films must have been made w/in prior 12 mos, released only in country of origin & not entered in other film fests. Official component consists of 3 sections: In Competition, for features & shorts competing for major fest awards: Palme d'Or, Special Jury Prize, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Director, Jury Prize. Special Out of Competition accepts features ineligible for competition (e.g. by previous winners of the Palme d'Or). *Un Certain Regard*, noncompetitive section, is for films of int'l quality that do not qualify for Competition, films by new directors, etc. Parallel sections incl. *Quinzaine des Realisateurs* (Directors Fortnight), main sidebar for new talent, showing fiction feature films, sponsored by Association of French Film Directors (deadline mid April); *La Semaine de la Critique* (International Critics Week), selection of 1st or 2nd features and docs chosen by members of French Film Critics Union (selections must be completed w/in 12 mos prior to fest) & Perspectives on French Cinema. Film market, administered separately, screens film in main venue and in local theater. Top prizes incl. Official Competition's Palme d'Or (feature & short) and Caméra d'Or (best first film in any section). For info & press accreditation from U.S., contact: Catherine Verret, French Film Office, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10151; (212) 832-8860; fax: (212) 755-0629. Additional contact information: Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, Societé des Réalisateurs de Films, 215 rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 61 01 66, fax: 011 33 1 40 74 07 96. Semaine International de la Critique, 73, rue de Lourmel, 75015 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 75 68 27. Cannes Film Market, attn: Marcel Lathière, 99 boul. Maalesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 61 66 09; fax: 011 33 1 45 61 97 59.

Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None . Deadline: early March. Contact: Cannes International Film Festival, 99, Boulevard Malesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 61 66 00; fax: 011 33 1 45 61 97 60.

GOLDEN ROSE OF MONTREUX TELEVISION FESTIVAL, Late April/early May, Switzerland. Organized jointly by Swiss Broadcasting Corporation and City of Montreux under auspices of European Broadcasting Union, this is Europe's largest fest for light entertainment tv programs, now in its 36th yr & attended by 1,000 tv professionals from over 30 countries. Broadcaster, producer & distributor entries compete against each other in cats of comedy, music & general light entertainment, w/ each cat having its own int'l jury. Broadcasters & ind producers eligible to compete. 2 awards in each cat: Silver Rose, Bronze Rose. In comedy cat, 1st prize is Special Prize of City of Montreux. 3 1st prizes submitted to Grand Jury for Golden Rose of Montreux award for best entertainment program of all cats, w/ cash award of SFr. 10,000. Fest also awards Prix UNDA to program which best reflects human values, Press Prize & 3 additional prizes at jury's discretion. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 14 mos, w/ running time of 20-60 min. Complimentary Videokiosk screening facility where attendees can view latest in int'l light entertainment programming. Heavy int'l press coverage. Entry fees are payable only if the program is selected by pre-selection jury. Formats accepted: Beta, Beta SP; 1/2" for VideoKiosk. Entry fee: SFr. 500. Deadline: mid-Feb. Fest address: Pierre Grandjean, secretary general, Rose d'Or de Montreux, Télévision Suisse Romande, 20 Quai Ernest Ansermet, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland; tel: 011 41 22 708 89 98; fax: 011 41 22 781 52 49. US contact: John E. Nathan, North American representative, Golden Rose of Montreux Television Festival, 488 Madison Avenue, Suite 1710, New York, NY 10022; (212) 223-0044; fax: (212) 223-4531.

HAMBURG INTERNATIONAL SHORT/NO BUDGET FILM FESTIVAL, June, Germany. Forum for ind produced short films & videos under 20 min. Int'l short film competition awards Hamburg Short Film Award (Major Award), donated by *Premiere*; Jury's Special Award, Award for Best Animation, Premiere Prize (purchase of TV rights by Premiere & Canal +, France & Spain) & Viewers' Award. Fest also incl No Budget Competition, for films which have been produced w/out public subsidies or private sponsorship; their foremost feature should be "realization of an idea," & technical quality is of secondary importance. No Budget Award (jury award) & Viewers' Award. Another fest feature is *Three Minute Quickie* competition, under different theme each yr (1995 theme was "back door"). Entries in this cat should be 3 min. max. In 1995 fest inaugurated Int'l Hamburg Short Film Market, opportunity to see all films and videos submitted to fest as well as films in ShortFilmAgency's video archive. 1995 fest also debuted "Digital Video" section for entirely digitally produced videos w/ max length of 20 min. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4," 1/2," Beta SP. Entry fee: None. Deadline: early March. Contact: Fest Director, Hamburger Kurzfilmfestival No-Budget, KurzFilmAgentur Hamburg e.V., No







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KRACOW INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Late May/early June. Founded in 1963, this is one of longer running European competitive short film fests, providing presentation opportunity for any films, up to 30 min., released around world btw. successive festival events. Genres of films presented during fest range from straightforward docs to cartoons; all are considered. Fest's preference is docs, especially ones that reflect changes in human condition and environment at turn of the century, which "provide inspiring insight into social, political or national makeup of society at large." About 150 short films programmed each yr. Awards incl Grand Prix, Golden Dragon, Silver Dragon & Bronze Dragon. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: None. Deadline: mid-Feb. Contact: Festival Director, Kracow International Short Film Festival, Miedzynarodowy Festiwal Filmow Krotkometrazowych W Krakow, Apollo Film, Ul. Pychowicka 730-364 Krakow, Poland; tel: 011 48 12 67 23 40; fax: 011 48 12 67 15 2.

LAON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, Late March/early April. Fest for "high grade youth cinema promotion." Accepts feature-length films made for children & young people for competition, which shows about 10 films; entries should not have been released in France. No selection of short films. Awards: Grand Prize (50,000FF) offered by Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports; City of Laon Prize (30,000FF); La Poste (20,000FF, and La Caisse d'Epargne (20,000FF); CIFEJ Prize. All of these prizes are offered to the French distributor. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: mid-Feb. Contact: Marie-Thérèse Chambon, festival director, Festival International du Cinéma Jeune Public de Laon, Maison des Arts et Loisirs, Place Aubry, B.P. 526, 02001 Laon Cedex, France; tel: 011 33 23 20 38 61; fax: 011 33 23 20 28 99.

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, Australia. FIAPF-recognized fest celebrates its 45th anniversary in 1996 as one of Australia's 2 largest, and its oldest, fests. Fest director programs eclectic mix of ind work, with special interest in feature docs & shorts. Each yr substantial program of new Australian cinema programmed. Int'l short film competition is important part of fest, w/ cash prizes in 7 cats: Grand Prix City of Melbourne Award for Best Film ($5,000); & $2,000 each in best Australian, experimental, animated, doc & fiction film cats. Additional special awards incl: Kino Cinemas Award for creative excellence in Australian short film ($2,500); ANZAAS/Scienceworks award for outstanding film or video dealing w/ science-related subject ($1,500); Melbourne International Film Festival Awards for outstanding achievement in video production & best student production. Entry open to films of all kinds, except training & advertising films. Films 60 min. or less eligible for Int'l Short Film Competition; films over 60 min. can be entered in non-competitive feature program. Video & super 8 productions considered for "out-of-competition" screenings. Entries must have been completed w/in the previous yr & not screened previously in Melbourne or broadcast on Australian TV. Fest is useful window to Australian theatrical & nontheatrical outlets, educational distributors & new Australian television networks interested in buying shorts. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2," super 8. Entry fee: $20. Deadline: mid-March. Contact: Tait Brady, festival director, Melbourne International Film Festival, 207 Johnston Street, P.O. Box 2206, Fitzroy 3065 Australia; tel: 011 61 3 417 2011; fax: 011 61 3 417 3804.

MIP/TV INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAM MARKET, April, France. One of busiest int'l TV markets, held at Cannes' Palais des Festivals & considered 1 of largest & most important program markets for buying & selling of program rights & setting up co-production agreements & joint ventures. Several thousand TV buyers (public & commercial), distributors, programmers, producers & other media professionals from over 100 countries attend. In 1995 there were 833 registered exhibitors, 2,245 companies registered, and over 10,000 attendees. Market publishes 2 magazines & guide which encompass themes of market. Listings in market publication incl major trends, calendars of events, seminar programs, new companies, new services & lists of leading buyers at MIP. Other services incl *MIP-TV News*, special reports & 9,000 copies of *MIP-TV Guide* (a who's who). Market receives major attention in int'l trade press. Participation w/out stand possible; that service incl. admission for 3 employees, use of participant's club & listing in MIP-TV guide. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: varies. Deadline: early March. Contact: Jacques Gibout, international sales director, MIP/TV International Television Program Market, Marché International des Programmes de Television, Reed Midem Organisation, 179 avenue Victor-Hugo, 75116 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 44 34 44 44; fax: 011 33 1 44 34 44 00. US contact: International Exhibition Organization, 475 Park Avenue South, 30th fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 689-4220; fax: (212) 689-4348.

MONS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, March, Belgium. Founded in 1976, this competitive fest annually showcases about 150 35mm short film productions over 3 days, before 3 international jury & audiences of over 1,000. Young filmmakers especially welcomed. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 years. Awards incl Gold Monkeys, Special Prizes & cash awards. Formats accepted: 35mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: None. Deadline: early February. Contact: Alain Cardon, president Mons International Short Film Festival, Festival International du Film Court de Mons, 106, rue des Arbalestriers, 7000 Mons, Belgium; tel: 011 32 65 31 81 75; fax: 011 32 65 31 30 27.

OBERHAUSEN INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, April, Germany. Founded shortly after WWII under annual theme *Way to the Neighbor*, this important fest on int'l short film fest circuit showcases innovative ind. & experimental short & doc films of all genres. It has always been known as place of debates & controversial films & fest is committed to following new trends in media & technology, forms & expressions featured in short film, aesthetical developments in video works & specific artistic approaches to computer-generat-

ed images. FIAPF-recognized competitive event programs social doc, new developments in animation, experimental & short features, student films (especially from film schools), first films & works from countries throughout world. Different sections & int'l competition screen films & videos up to 35 min., completed after Jan 1st of preceding 2 yrs. Awards: Grand Prize of Town of Oberhausen (DM10,000); 2 Principal Prizes (DM5,000 each); Special Prizes (DM1,000-5,000), incl. Eulenspiegel-Preis (Owlglass Prize) for Most Humorous (DM1,000); Alexander Scotti prize to best film on "Old Age and Death" (DM2,000); Best Film on Educational Politics (DM5,000); Fipresci Prize (DM2,000); Prize of Catholic Film Association (DM2,000). Special programs also part of fest, as is German Competition, retrospective of film school, Filmotheque of Youth & Children's Cinema Competition, which awards prize of DM3,000, decided by jury of children. Fest also has a concurrent market. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Super 8, Beta, Pal, 8mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: mid-Feb. Contact: Angela Haardt, Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Grillostrasse 34, D-46042 Oberhausen, Germany; tel: 011 49 208 807 008; fax: 011 49 208 825 5413; kurzfilmtage.oberhausen@uni.duisburg.de.

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL, June, Australia. This major FIAPF-recognized Australian film event is one of world's oldest (over 40 years old) & leading international showcases for new work. Its stated purpose is to create & maintain interest in cinema by discriminating audience, to present films which otherwise might not have been shown in Sydney, to gain attention & publicity for films shown & to assist in their wider Australian distribution & to promote better understanding among nations through film medium. Noncompetitive int'l program incl. features & docs from around world; experimental works; retrospective; competition for Australian short films; special nights featuring particular country or region; late shows offering something out of ordinary; as well as series of forums & lectures w/ visiting directors. Many of selected films shared w/ Melbourne Film Fest, which runs almost concurrently. Fest director attends number of int'l fests each yr as well as working w/ several film institutions around world to solicit entries. Most Australian distributors & TV buyers attend. Fest has enthusiastic & loyal audience & is excellent opportunity for publicity & access to Australian markets. Fest is held at State Theatre, 1929 picture palace acknowledged as one of finest fest venues in world; other city venues also used. Fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers; results have good deal of influence w/ Australian distributors. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 mos & be Australian premieres. Formats accepted: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Entry fee: None. Deadline: mid-March. Contact: Paul Byrnes, festival director, Sydney Film Festival, P.O. Box 950, Glebe, NSW, Australia; tel: 011 61 2 660 3844; fax: 011 61 2 692 8793.

TORONTO WORLDWIDE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Late May-early June, Canada. All-shorts competitive fest solicits int'l entries for pro-

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gram. Purpose of fest is "to broaden people's perspective on short films so as to view them on an artistic and commercial level...to help educate and expose the culturally diverse audience to the short film genre." Awards: best animated short, best short doc, best dramatic short, best short comedy, best experimental short. Spafax Airline Network presents award for films that will be selected to air on Air Canada. Sections of fest incl. Galas, International Program, Visions Canada, First Nations Productions (for submissions from aboriginal filmmakers from around world), Established Directors First Short, and Award Winning Shorts. Entries must not exceed 40 min. and must have been produced w/in last 2 yrs. Fest receives over 100 entries from throughout world; also sponsors short film market. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $8. Deadline: mid-March. Contact: Brenda Sherwood, executive director, Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival, 1240 Bay Street, Suite 305, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 2A7; tel: (416) 966-4846; fax: (416) 966-4743.

TRENTO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN AND EXPLORATION FILMS, Late April/early May, Italy. 1996 marks 44th edition of this competitive fest devoted to mountain films (which contribute to knowledge & conservation of mountains by exalting their symbolic values & representing their historical, social & environmental reality); exploration films (which broaden & examine discovery &/or study of territories, water & space, incl. outer space & related physical, anthropological, ethnological, natural & faunistic phenomena); & mountaineering, adventure & sports films (which examine man's resources in action in natural mountain environments, particularly in sport & mountaineering). Long, medium & short films & telefilms (fiction & doc) eligible for competition. Awards: Gran Premio "Cittá di Trento" (Gold Gentian & 10,000,000 lire); Silver Gentians & 3,000,000 lire each to best fiction feature film, best film on mountaineering, best film on exploration and/or environmental conservation, best film on adventure, including RAI Award for best electronically created film. Special Jury Prize for Italian director & Special Prize for best photography. Films may also be shown out of competition. Deadline: early March. Contact: Gian Luigi Bozza, festival director, Filmfestival Internazionale della Montagna e dell'Esplorazione, Via S. Croce 67, 38100 Trento, Italy; tel: 011 39 461 98 61 20; fax: 011 39 461 23 78 32.

TURIN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY FILMS, April, Italy. 1995 marked 10th edition of fest, making it one of longest-running int'l gay & lesbian events. Entries should be by lesbian/gay filmmakers or address lesbian/gay themes & issues. 1995 edition showed about 150 titles. Competition section divided betw 3 juries: doc, long feature & short feature. Panorama section features new int'l productions. New award named after the late Ottravio Mai, who co-founded the festival, is presented to best screenplay for short film w/ gay theme. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: early February. Contact: Elisabetta Humouda, program coordinator, Turin International Festival of Lesbian and Gay Films, Da Sodoma a Hollywood, Via T.

Tasso 11, 10122 Torino, Italy; tel: 011 39 11 534 888; fax: 011 39 11 535 796.

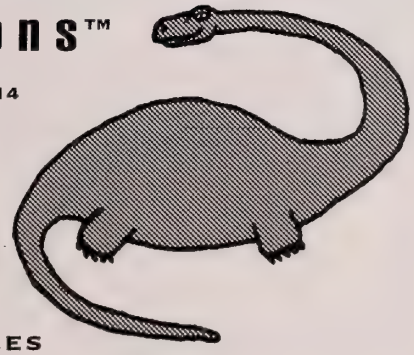
VERONA INTERNATIONAL CINEMA WEEK, April, Italy. Annual fest, founded in 1970, is devoted to the film production of one nation (or nations w/ common geographic & cultural traditions), which is usually distributed in Italy only partially or is limited to certain directors. Countries/regions have incl. Africa, Poland, Canada, Belgium, Greece, India, Brazil, Turkey, Japan, Australia, Russia, etc. Parallel sections feature, e.g., works of renowned director from guest country & int'l round table at end of week in which themes emerging from films are discussed. In 1995, fest was devoted to British Cinema; new productions directed by emerging talents running for award "Stefano Reggiani" for best recently-produced film, retro section devoted to Laurence Olivier; & a section inspired by Romeo & Juliet's myth. Nat' and int'l coverage is extensive, w/ fest covered in up to 70 magazines, papers & networks. About 30 films showcased each yr. Formats accepted: 35mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: mid-Feb. Contact: Pietro Barzisa, festival director, Verona International Cinema Week, Settimana Cinematografica Internazionale, Via S. Giacomo alla Pigna 6, 37121 Verona, Italy; tel: 011 39 45 8006778; fax: 011 39 45 590624.

VUES D'AFRIQUE, Late April/early May, Canada. Along with FESPACO in Ouagadougou, fest founded in 1983, is impt showcase for films from Africa & African diaspora. Over 55,000 people attend screenings. Cats of exhibition incl. Panorama du cinema africain, Images créoles, Télévisions africaines, Regard canadien, Ecrans Nord-Sud, and new section Franco-Sud. 1995 festival incl. section on historical colonial cinema & initiated Prix du Public & Prix vidéo-clips. It also held colloquium on "Rwanda and International Information." Other programs incl. debates & conferences, cinema for youth, expositions, information kiosks, music, dance, literature & food. Fiction & doc, long & short are programmed. Fest also travels to other cities in Canada. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: late March. Contact: Géraldine Le Chene Vues d'Afrique, Les Journées du Cinéma Africain et Créole, 67 rue Ste. Catherine Ouest, 5ème étage, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 1Z7; (514) 284-3322; fax: (514) 845-0631.

WORLD WIDE VIDEO FESTIVAL, April, The Hague. This fest entered its 14th year in 1996. Last yr more than 100 recent video productions illustrating recent electronic arts developments were screened; CD-i and CD-ROM were introduced in 1995, shown along w/ selection of int'l videotapes & installations. Screenings, presentations, lectures & symposia at Theater aan het Spui in center of The Hague. Installations shown at World Wide Video Centre, Haags Centrum voor Aktuele Kunst, het Archief, Galerie Maldoror en Theater Zeebelt. All selected productions shown publicly on large screen or monitor, depending on nature of work. All genres accepted & productions may be presented in any language. Straight recordings of performances, theater or music as well as film transferred to video not eligible; film excerpts & slides allowed as part of video work. Videomarket, held for 2 days during fest, is opportunity for distributors, producers, artists, magazines & art spaces.. Formats accepted: 3/4," 1/2," CD-ROM. Entry fee: None. Deadline: early March. Contact: Antoinette te Paske, World Wide Video Festival, Spui 189, 2511 BN The Hague, The Netherlands; tel: 011 31 70 36 44805; fax: 011 31 70 36 14448; 100340.411@compuserve.com.

YAMAGATA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, October, Japan. Founded in 1989, this fest endeavors to promote "best works of doc art" in main competition and in variety of special events, such as an ongoing Asia Program. Fest is sponsored by Yamagata City, about 360 km NE of Tokyo. Entries should be films intended to be docs, unreleased publicly in Japan prior to fest, produced after Apr 1 of the preceding 2 yrs & feature-length (over 60 min.). Int'l jury awards: Grand Prize, known as Robert and Frances Flaherty Prize (¥3,000,000); Mayor's Prize (¥1,000,000); 2 runner up prizes (¥300,000 each) & 1 special prize (¥300,000). Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: late March. Contact: Kazuyuki Yano, director, Tokyo Office, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Tokyo Office, Kitagawa Bldg., 4th Fl., 6-42 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan; tel: 011 81 3 32 66 97 04; fax: 011 81 3 32 66 97 00; hhg02034@niftyserve.or.jp. U.S. contact: Gordon Hitchens, 214 West 85th Street, Apt. 3W, New York, NY 10024-3914; tel/fax: (212) 877-6856.

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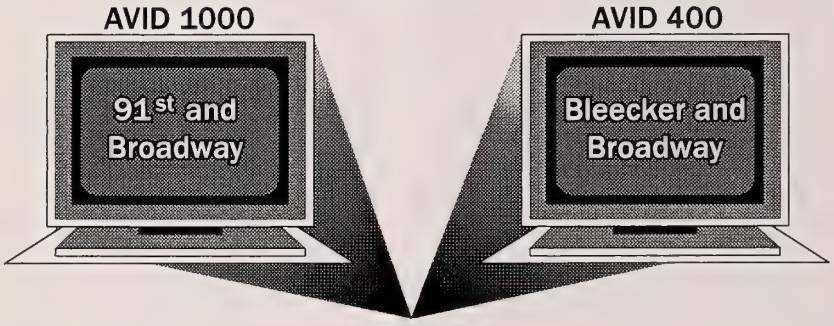
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16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUND TRACKS! If you want "High Quality" sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" sound negative. Contact Mike Holloway, Optical Sound/-Chicago Inc., 24 W. Erie, Chicago, Il 60610; (312) 943-1771 or (708) 541-8488.

3/4" SONY OFFLINE SYSTEM delivered to you & installed: 5850, 5800, RM 440, 2 monitors, $500/wk., $1,600/mo. Delivery & installation incl. Equipment clean & professionally maintained. Thomas (212) 929-2439; (201) 667-9894.

ATLANTA-FILM/VIDEO POSTPRODUCTION: Serving the no-budget, low-budget filmmaker. Nonlinear digital picture editing, digital audio editing w/ picture lockup. $20/hr w/ editor. Contact Cliff Lyttle @ Mecca Digital Postworks, (404) 808-7139.

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INT'L VIDEO TRANSFERS: From US to PAL, PAL-M, PAL N, Secam; from PAL, PAL-M, PAL N to US. All video formats: VHS, S-VHS, Hi8, 3/4", Betacam. Fast, professional, affordable. Call Barry (212) 941-5800.

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VIDEOTAPE RESTORATION: Obsolete formats (incl. 1/2" reel to reel & 2" Quad), damaged & aging videotape remastered to any format. Film-to-tape transfer at $150/hr using Rank Cintel. Full equipped/experienced staff. Call VidiPax (212) 982-5676, ext. 101.

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Competitions

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST for writers who haven't earned money writing for TV/film. All genres. $1500 top prize. $35 entry fee. Deadline: Jan. 31. For rules, send SASE to: MCFC, PO Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942.

PHILADELPHIA STORIES: 4th Annual "Set in Philadelphia" Screenwriting Competition accepting submissions nationally for original feature-length screenplays set primarily in greater Philadelphia metro area. All genres. Awards: $5,000, passes to Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, story notes. Postmark deadline: Jan. 10. $20 entry fee. For info, send SASE to: PFWC/Screenwriting Competition, International House, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104.

PRIMATOLOGY FILM COMPETITION: Awarding best films/videos produced since Jan. 1990, in both commercial & ind. categories. Five best in each will be screened at meetings of International Primatological Society & American Society of Primatologists. Send 3/4" or 1/2" NTSC tape, synopsis, entry fee ($25 non-professional, $50 professional) & return shipping fee ($10 US, $25 int'l) by March 1 to Charles Weisbard, Box 165, Rockefeller University, 1230 York Ave., NY, NY 10021-6399. For more information call (718) 274-2365; fax (212) 327-8634; e-mail weisbac@rockvax.rockefeller.edu.

Attention Advertisers

NEW AD OPTIONS

Beginning with the March issue, classified advertisers will have two options for ad length. For ads up to 240 characters, the cost will be $25/issue for members, $35/issue for nonmembers. Ads of 240-480 characters in length will now also be available at a cost of $45/issue for members, $65/issue for nonmembers.

DISCOUNT FOR MULTIPLE PLACEMENTS

If you order a classified run of at least 5 issues, there will be a discount of $5/issue. For example, a member's cost to place an ad for 5 issues would be $100, rather than $125.

VIDEO SHORTS COMPETITION is accepting entries in general and PSA categories. Cash prizes awarded. Entry postmark deadline of Feb 1. For details & entry forms write: Video Shorts, PO Box 20369, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010.

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST is accepting scripts from throughout US. 5 to 6 winners will be chosen to receive $500 cash award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: Ongoing. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop National Contest, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

Conferences • Seminars

FILM/VIDEO ARTS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT provides quality, hands-on instruction in film & video prod. at reasonable rates & offers year-round schedule of beginning, intermediate & advanced courses. Education Department (212) 673-9361.

THE MEDIA & DEMOCRACY CONGRESS, to be held in San Francisco on Feb. 29, March 1 & 2, will address the threat to democracy posed by the consolidation of media power in the hands of a few transnat'l corporations. Papers proposing new media systems, products & collaborations will be distributed beforehand. Contact: Institute for Alternative Journalism, 77 Federal St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 284-1420; fax: 1414; e-mail: 71362,27@compuserve.com.

Films • Tapes Wanted

AIR & SPACE NETWORK, a new cable & satellite TV network, is looking for programs related to aviation, space, space flight, exploration, astronomy, weather, etc. Biographies are also of interest. Fiction, nonfiction, docs, educational, informational, or general entertainment. Contact: ASN, 2701 NW Vaughn St., ste. 475, Portland, OR 97210-5366; (503) 224-9821; fax: 241-3507.

ART IN GENERAL seeks video works & guest-curated video programs for new monthly screening series. All kinds of work welcome, from experimental film & video to home videos; doc & activist to public access works. Send VHS tape (cued), résumé &/or brief statement & SASE. For more info, call Joanna Spitzner (212) 219-0473.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, IND. PRODUCER offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subject matter. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, a Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, is accepting all genres, under 28 mins., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled with name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201. (716) 884-7172; e-mail wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; WWW: http: freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel/.



BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS currently accepting works of any genre for ongoing "Public Exposure" program. Works will be considered for a bi-monthly "video-zine," open screenings, galleries, clubs, submissions to fests, etc. Let us use our marketing skills to get your works seen. No fee to submit. Send 1/2", Hi8, or 8mm w/ SASE for tape return to: Joel S. Bachar, Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; e-mail: witerain@nwrain.com.

BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION seeks films & videos by black ind. makers, directors, or producers for "Black Vision" portion of *Screen Scene*, weekly 1/2-hr show that previews TV lineup & latest theatrical releases. Contact: *Screen Scene*, BET, 1899 9th St. NE, Washington, DC 20018; (202) 608-2800.

BLACK VIDEO PERSPECTIVE, new community TV prod. in Atlanta area, seeks works for/by/about African Americans. Contact: Karen L. Forest (404) 231-4846.

CAFE Y PELICULA looking for films & videos for possible monthly exhibition. Students' work welcome. No payment; ongoing deadline. Send 3/4" or 1/2" with appropriate release, credits, awards & personal info to: Cafe y Pelicula, PO Box 362991, San Juan, PR 00936-2991; e-mail: crubin@caribe.net.

CINCINNATI ARTISTS' GROUP EFFORT seeks proposals for exhibitions, performances & audio/video/film works to show in their galleries. Experimental, traditional & collaborative projects encouraged. Contact: CAGE, 1416 Main St., Cincinnati, OH 45210; (513) 381-2437.

CINE CLUB seeks VHS submissions of ind. shorts for future programs. Send SASE & brief résumé to: Cine Club c/o Sophie Fenwick, 335 Court St., 82, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Also welcomes proposals from ind. curators & others.

CINEMA VIDEO, monthly showcase of works by ind. video & filmmakers, seeks S-VHS or VHS submissions of any style, content, or length. Cinema Video is prod. of Velvet Elvis Arts Lounge Theater in Seattle, WA, a nonprofit fringe theater. Send submissions to: Kevin Picolet, 2207 E. Republican, Seattle, WA 98112; (206) 323-3307.

CINEQUEST, weekly 1/2-hr TV series profiling best of ind. cinema & video from US & around world, looking for films/videos, all genres, less than 20 min. to air on 30 min. cable show. Submit on 1/2" or 3/4" video. Send pre-paid mailer for return. Contact:





NOTICES

Michael D. McGowan, Producer, Cinequest Productions, 2550 Alafayia Trail, Apt. 8100, Orlando, FL 32826; (407) 658-4865.

CITY TV, an Emmy Award-winning, progressive municipal cable channel in Santa Monica, seeks programming of any length, esp. works about seniors, disabled, children, Spanish-lang. & video art. Our budget is limited, but we offer opportunity for producers to showcase work. Cablecast rights may be exchanged for equip. access. Contact: Lisa Bernard, Programming Specialist, City TV, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 458-8913.

CONNECT TV, a new series on ind. videomakers, seeks work for 1/2-hr show. Progressive, social issue docs, art, humor. Will air on Cablevision of CT. Metro Video (203) 866-1090.

CUCARACHA THEATRE seeks 16mm films for Tuesday night series in Jan. & Feb. Send 2 tapes to: Chris Oldcom/Janet Paparazzo, c/o Cucaracha, 500 Greenwich St., NY, NY 10013.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for the Spirit of Dance, a live, 1 hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Produced at Cape Cod Community Television, South Yarmouth, MA. (508) 430-1321; fax: (508) 398-4520.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To include work in this resource or for info, contact: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

FILM PRODUCER SEEKS original or adapted comedic screenplays/synopses suited to $300,000-$750,000 budgets. Will option; points/prod. position possible. Submissions w/ SASE for return to: Infinity Pictures, 21 Kent St., Brookline, MA 02146.

HALCYON DAYS PRODUCTIONS seeks video segments, 1-5 min., any genre, by 15- to 25-year-olds for video compilation show. If piece is selected, you may have chance to be video correspondent for show. Submit VHS or Hi8 (returnable w/ SASE) to: Mai Kim Holley, Halcyon Days Prod., c/o Hi8, 12 West End Ave., 5th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 397-7754.

HERE, a not-for-profit arts organization, seeks submissions of films & videos for 1995-96 season. 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", all genres & lengths. Installation proposals also welcome. Send VHS, resume & description of work to: HERE, 145 Ave. of the Americas, frnt. 1, NY, NY 10013, attn: film/video. Enclose SASE for more info. about upcoming season.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8") videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone to: *In the Mix*, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

IN VISIBLE COLOURS FILM & VIDEO SOCIETY seeks videos by women of color for library collection. Work will be accessible to members, producers, multicultural groups & educational institutions. For more info, contact: Claire Thomas, In Visible Colours, 119 W. Pender, ste. 115, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1S5; (604) 682-1116.

IND. FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, cable access show; seeks student & ind. films & videos to give artists exposure. Send films or video in 3/4" format w/ paragraph about artist & his/her work. Send to: *The Independent Film & Video Showcase*, 2820 S. Sepulveda Blvd. #7, Los Angeles, CA 90064, Attn: Jerry Salata.

LATINO COLLABORATIVE, bimonthly screening series seeks works by Latino film/videomakers. Honoraria paid. Send VHS preview tapes to: Latino Collaborative Bimonthly Screening Series, Vanessa Codorniu, 280 Broadway, ste. 412, NY, NY 10007; (212) 732-1121.

NERVOUS IMPULSE, nat'l screening series focusing on science, seeks films/videos. Open to experimental, non-narrative & animated works that address scientific representation or knowledge or interplay between science & culture. Send preview VHS & SASE to: Nervous Impulse, Times Square Station, PO Box 2578, NY, NY 10036-2578.

NEW DAY FILMS, the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. Contact New Day Films, (415) 332-2577.

THE NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART & the Educational Video Center seek recent work that explores youth perspectives on cultural identity, relationship, sexuality, health, disabilities, family, school, immigration, violence, etc., in genres incl. memoir, testimonial, narrative, doc, experimental & public service announcement. Selected works will be incl. in fall '96 exhibit at museum. Formats: VHS, S-VHS, or 3/4", no more than 15 min. length. For interactive computer projects: disk or written proposal for PC or MAC. Deadline: Jan. 1. Enclose SASE w/ submission to: Brian Goldfarb, Curator of Education, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 583 Broadway, NY, NY 10012.

NEWCITY PRODUCTIONS seeks completed or in-progress docs on all subjects for monthly screenings. Committed to promoting ind. community by establishing forum of new voices. Have professional large screen video projector. Send cassettes to NewCity Productions, 635 Madison Ave., ste. 1101, NY, NY 10022; (212) 753-1326.

NEWTON TELEVISION FOUNDATION seeks proposals on ongoing basis from ind. producers. NTF is nonprofit foundation collaborating w/ ind. producers on docs concerning contemporary issues. Past works have been broadcast on local & nat'l public TV, won numerous awards & most are currently in distribution in educational market. Contact NTF for details: 1608 Beacon St., Waban, MA 02168; (617) 965-8477; email: ntf@tmn.com; walshntf@aol.com.

OFFLINE seeks creative & independently pro-

duced videos. The hr-long show airs biweekly on public access channels throughout NY State & around the country. Submissions should not exceed 20 min. Longer works will be considered for serialization. Formats: 3/4", S-VHS, Hi8 or VHS. Incl. postage for tape return. OffLine, 203 Pine Tree Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850; (607) 272-2613; email: 72137.3352@compuserve.com.

THE OTHER SIDE FILM SHOW is looking for entries in all cats: narrative, doc, experimental, animation, etc. for TV series of ind. films/videos. Submissions should be under 30 min. 3/4" video preferred, but VHS acceptable. Send w/ SASE for tape return to U. of South Florida, Art Dept., 4202 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL 33620-7350, attn: *The Other Side*.

OVERWINED PRODUCTIONS, weekly intimate theater & public access program, seeks contemporary film/video in any format to be showcased in & around Detroit area. Contact: Patrick Dennis, 2660 Riverside Dr., Trenton, Michigan, 48183-2807; (313) 676-3876.

PLANET CENTRAL, new LA-based cable station focusing on the environment, global economy & holistic health, is looking for stories ideas & video footage for new fall alternative weekly news program *Not in the News*. Send info to: Planet Central, c/o World TV, 6611 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 871-9153; fax: 469-2193.

PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS COLLECTIVE, a newly formed group promoting radical ideas & causes in mass media, is seeking 5-20 min. videos for inclusion in a new program, *Channel 497*, sched. to premiere on public access cable in Feb. Inquiries to ap206@lafn.org, or PCC, PO Box 691472, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

RANDOLPH STREET GALLERY seeks independently produced, innovative music videos for an upcoming screening, "Alternawhat: Rejects from MTV," featuring work that challenges the perimeters of industry music video prod. Deadline: Jan. 20, 1996. Send VHS tape, bio materials & SASE to Joan Dickenson, Randolph Street Gallery, 756 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 666-7737; fax: 8986; e-mail: randlph@merle.acns.nwu.edu.

REGISTERED seeks experimental & non-narrative videos about consumerism &/or modern ritual for nationally touring screening. Send VHS for preview w/ SASE & short description to: Registered, attn. Joe Sola, PO Box 1960, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009.

RIGHTS & WRONGS, weekly, nonprofit human rights global TV magazine series scheduled to resume broadcast in Feb. seeks story ideas & footage for upcoming season. Contact: Danny Schechter or Rory O'Connor, exec. producers, The Global Center, 1600 Broadway, ste. 700, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-0202; fax: 2677.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast! Submit to: EDGE TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

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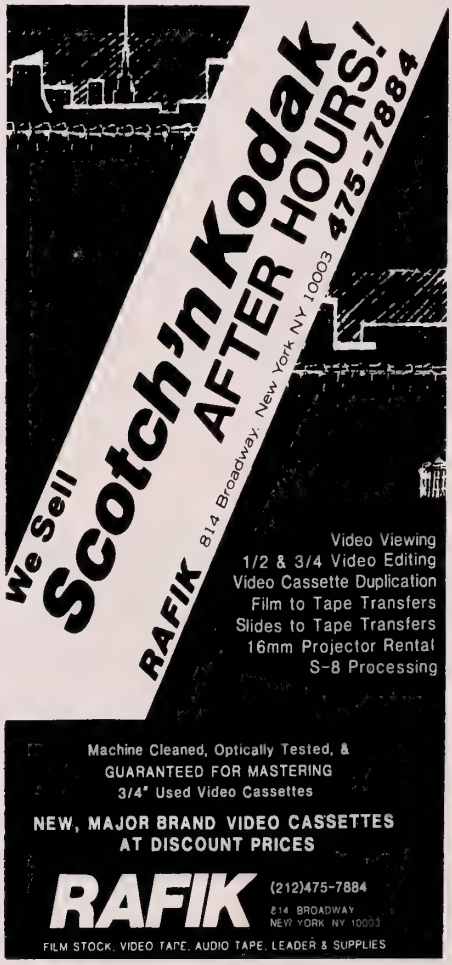
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NOTICES

STATEN ISLAND COMMUNITY TELEVISION PRODUCER seeks experimental works, all subjects, by ind. video & film artists. The more explicit, the better; film & video on 3/4" preferred, but 1/2" &/or 8mm acceptable. Send tapes to: Matteo Masiello, 140 Redwood Loop, Staten Island, NY 10309.

THE SPIRIT OF DANCE, live, 1-hr monthly program covering all aspects of dance, seeks excerpts under 5 min. from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Produced at Cape Cod Comunity Television, South Yarmouth, MA. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, (508) 759-7005; fax: (508) 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

TOXIC TELEVISION seeks broadcast-quality, creative video shorts (under 10 min.) for alternative TV experience. Looking for works in animation, puppetry, experimental, computers, etc. Send VHS or 3/4" tape, SASE & résumé to: Tom Lenz, 6060 Windhover Dr., Orlando, FL 32819.

UNQUOTE TV, 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing new, innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, experimental, performance works under 28 min. Program seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote TV*, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS is accepting video & 16mm film in all genres for next season of programming. Fee paid if accepted. Send VHS tape w/ SASE to: Film Committee, UTICA, 88 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

VIDEO ICON, new TV program focusing on innovative video/ film art & animation, is currently reviewing work. Send VHS or S-VHS copy & SASE. Floating Image Productions, PO Box 66365, Los Angeles, CA 90066; (310) 313-6935.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

WEIRD TV, satellite TV show airing weekly on Telstar 302, specializes in alternative viewing. Will consider works of 3 min. max., animation or shorts. Submit work to: *Weird TV*, 1818 W. Victory, Glendale, CA 91201; (818) 637-2820.

WYBE-TV 35, Philadelphia's ind. TV station, seeks work for series featuring film & video from ind. media artists from around the nation. This 10-hr, 10-wk series airs in primetime each spring. All styles welcome; shorts up to 20 min. preferred. Deadline: Jan. 1996. Entry forms avail. from: *Through the Lens* 6, WYBE-TV 35, 6070 Ridge Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19128; (215) 483-3900; fax 6908.

Publications

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FILMMAKERS wanted to submit résumé, bio, filmography, reviews for possible inclusion in book by African-American author to be published by Greenwood Press. Filmmakers w/ significant filmography & w/distributors where work can be screened given preference. Author will pay nominal fee to screen some work directly from filmmaker. Contact: Spencer Moon, 766 1/2 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94102-4132; (800) 615-6290. Deadline: March 1.

Resources • Funds

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on an ongoing basis. Contact BF/VF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 3540; e-mail: bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: During this fiscal yr, 8 artists will receive grants for 30 hrs of subsidized use of The Media Loft video/computer suite at rate of $7.50/hr, in blocks of at least 5-hr segments. Grants awarded on ongoing basis to artists doing creative, experimental, narrative, language-based, visual, or conceptual video &/or Amiga computer work. Political, promotional, doc & commercial projects are not w/in framework of the grant. To apply, send project description, résumé, approximate dates of proposed use & statement of level of video &/or computer experience to: The Media Loft, 727 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

DCTV Artist-in-Residence is now accepting appls for $500 worth of equipment access on ongoing basis w/in 1 yr. When 1 funded project is complete, DCTV will review appls on file & select next project. Pref given to projects already underway. For appl., send SASE to: AIR, c/o DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10013-4435.

THE FINISHING FUNDS PROGRAM of the Experimental Television Center will be awarding grants of $500 toward completion costs for electronic media & film projects currently in progress. Applicants must be NY State residents, and the appl. deadline is Mar. 15. The Center also offers a residency program for video artists. For appl. forms & addt'l info, contact ETC Ltd., 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

HUMANITIES PROJECTS IN MEDIA administered by NEH has canceled the October & March deadlines. The new deadline for all appl. categories is Jan. 12, 1996. 20 copies of appl. required on or before deadline. For appl., guidelines, write: National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Public Programs, Humanities Projects in Media, rm. 420, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 606-8278; e-mail: mediaprogram@ neh.fed.us.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded are: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students are not eligible to apply. Call (312) 814-6750.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, post-prod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

MEDIANET: A GUIDE TO THE INTERNET FOR VIDEO & FILMMAKERS available free at http://www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or contact rriddle@infi.net.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr, $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION invites applicants for 1996-97 Scholars in Residence Program. The program provides support for full-time research & study at any Commission facility. Residencies are avail. for 4-12 consecutive wks between May 1, 1996 & April 30, 1997, at $1,200 per month. Program open to all conducting research on PA history. Deadline: Jan. 12, 1996. For more info & appl. materials, contact: Division of History, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108; (717) 787-3034.

THE STANDBY PROGRAM is a nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to providing artists & nonprofit organizations access to broadcast-quality video postprod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl.: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 0563.

VIRTUAL FILMFESTIVAL: Join the global community for independent filmmakers on-line at http://www.virtualfilm.com and look for us in person at IFFCON and the Sundance and Berlin Film Festivals. E-mail queries to virtualfest@ cineflix.com.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

YADDO invites appls from film/video artists for residencies of 2 wks to 2 mos at multi-disciplinary artists' community in Saratoga Springs, NY. Deadline: Jan. 15 (for May-Feb.). Artistic merit is standard for judgment. For more info write: The Admissions Committee, PO Box 395, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866; (518) 584-0746.

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MEMORANDA: *continued from p. 60*

Contact: Guy Perrotta (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

Schenectady, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6 p.m.
Where: Media Play, Mohawk Mall
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Washington, DC:
When: Tuesday, January 16, 7:00 pm -"Self-Distribution"; Thursday, February 15, 7:00 pm - "Documentary Filmmaking"
Where: Washington Performing Arts, 400 7th St. NW (at D St.)
Contact: Rebecca Crumlish, (202) 328-8355

HEY! WHAT ABOUT NEW YORK??
Glad you asked. The bad news is that we lost our salon space; if a member would like to step forward and find us a new home for the New York salon, we'd be thrilled. The good news is that we're starting a different kind of monthly member gathering, a works-in-progress screening at the office, "In the Works." (See item above for details.) For information on screenings, or if you want to volunteer to find a new Manhattan watering hole, call membership coordinator Leslie Fields, (212) 807-1400 x 222.



SCREENING ROOM AVAILABLE

Now that we're ensconced in our new office, we can proudly announce an important new service: a small screening room which members can rent at very reasonable rates to show work to buyers, programmers, family and friends. There is comfortable seating for about 25, although more can be accommodated if necessary. We have 1/2" and 3/4" VCR and monitor, and at press time are working on acquiring a screen for 16mm projection as well. For information on rates and availability, call membership coordinator Leslie Fields at (212) 807-1400 x 222.

INSURANCE UPDATE

Our insurance agent, TEIGET, is required by California law to offer a 30-day open enrollment period once each year for the CIGNA Health plans to all our California members. During the open enrollment period *any California resident-member who applies will be automatically accepted, regardless of medical history.*

The open enrollment period will begin January 1, 1996, and end January 30, 1996. Members may request application materials starting now; coverage may begin January 1, February 1, or March 1, 1996, at the member's option. However, all applications must be received by TEIGET prior to the requested starting date, and in all cases postmarked no later than January 30, 1996.

There are two CIGNA plans: a conventional HMO, and one where you can go to the doctor of your choice. For detailed information, contact TEIGET at 845 3rd Avenue, New York 10022; (212) 758-5675; fax: 888-4916.

MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to **Lynn Hershman Leeson**, who received the Cyberstar award from WDR (Köln, Germany) and has been invited to the Frieburger Video Forum.

Several AIVF members have received AFI Independent Film and Videomaker Grants in documentary and narrative categories: **Susana Aiken** (w/ Carlos Aparcio) for *The Transformation*, **Ross McElwee** for *Tobacco Road*, **Stanley Nelson** for *The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords*, **Jane Wagner** (w/ Tina Difeliciantonio) for *Madonna Mia*, and **Yvonne Rainer** for *MURDER and murder*.

Rainer also received a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts' Individual Artists Program. Other recipients include AIVF members **Esther Podemski** (*House of the World*), **Yunah Hong** (*Four Dreams from Far Away*), **Lexy Lovell** (*Riding the Rails*), **Katherine Rivera Pieratos** (*Wilma and Nicky*), **Rea Tajiri** (*Strawberry Fields*), **JT Orinne Takagi** (*Pickled Turnips*), and **Tracie Holder** (*Joe Papp: A Film in Five Acts* w/ Karen Thorsen), who also received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Retirement Research Foundation has awarded two National Media Owl Awards to AIVF members. **Patricia Resnick** received second prize in the Television and Theatrical Film Fiction category, for *Grandpa's Funeral*, an intimate and comdeic look into a happily dysfunctional family, and **Harlan Steinberger** won first prize in the Independent Films and Videotapes category for *Tibor Jankay: The Art of Survival*, profiling a 94-year-old artist and Holocaust survivor.

AIVF members were successful at the New England Film & Video Festival, with **Benjamin Goldman** winning the Best of Festival Award for *730 Grove Street*, and other awards going to **David Sutherland** (*Out of Sight*), **Mitch McCabe** (*Playing the Part*), **Buddy Squires** (*Listening to Children: A Moral Journey with Robert Coles*), **Jane Gillooly** (*Leona's Sister Gerri*), **Nina Davenport** (*Hello Photo*), and **Robin Hessman** (*Portrait of Boy with Dog*).

The Rockefeller Foundation has announced its 1995 Intercultural Film/Video/Multimedia Fellowship winners. They include AIVF members **Ellen Bruno** (*Slavegirls*), **Jem Cohen** (*Lost Book Found*), **Lisa Mann** (*Cat Calls*), **Salem Mekuria** (*Fragments of a Memorial*), **Meena Nanji** (*A Net of Jewels*), and **Jonathan Robinson** (*¡Oye Familia! A Dialogue with Society*).

The 1995 Roy W. Dean Grant Award has been given to member **Lee Lew-Lee**, who has also finished a production agreement with ZDF/Arte for a feature-length documentary about the Black Panther party.

The Experimental Television Center has announced recipients of its 1995 Finishing Funds. AIVF members **Sigrid Hackenberg** (*grass, flores, schoenes wasser/kleines wasser*), **Michelle Lippitt** (*(Navigating) The Physiology of Memory*), **Rohesia Hamilton-Metcalfe** (*If Spring, and Hope, Then Also Winter*), and **Michael Schell** (*Telephone Calls to the Dead*) were among the 25 winners.

AIVF members **Tod Solomon Lessing** and **Daniel Alpert** not only won first place in the Television/Documentary category of the 1995 Casey Medals for Meritorious Journalism, but also received a Bronze Plaque Award at the Columbus International Film & Video Festival for *Growin' Up Not a Child*, the first part of a PBS documentary series.

The Florida Film Festival Grand Jury awarded a Special Mention award to **Craig Baldwin** for *Sonic Outlaws*. **John G. Young** and the late **Marlon Riggs** won audience awards for Best Feature (*Parallel Sons*) and Best Documentary (*Black Is...Black Ain't*), respectively.

The New York Council for the Humanities has awarded **Marc Fields** a development grant for his documentary *A Mile of Cheap Thrills: A Social History of the Bowery*, sponsored by City Lore, Inc. Boston University awarded its Distinguished Alumni Award to Academy Award winner and AIVF member **Margaret Lazarus** (*Defending Our Lives*).

The Made for Public Television Award of the Great Plains Film Festival was shared by **Doris Loeser** for *I'll Ride That Horse!–Montana Women Bronc Riders*. Congratulations to all!

AIVF ON LINE

Find information, technical tips, advocacy updates, and member gossip, questions & news on AIVF'S America OnLine niche.

KEYWORD: ABBATE
Look for AIVF under the

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, operation of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

The Center for Arts Criticism, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, National Video Resources, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

Benefactors: Irwin W. Young

Patrons: Mary D. Dorman, Jeffrey Levy-Hinte, James Schamus

Sponsors: Ralph Arlyck, Coulter & Sands, Inc., David W. Haas, Dr. V. Hufnagel/Woman's Cable Network, Julio Riberio, Robert L. Seigel, George C. Stoney

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Acordia Hogg Robinson, NY, NY; Asset Pictures, NY, NY; Avid Technology, Tewksbury, MA; Kelli Barraco, Dallas, TX; Blackside Inc., Boston, MA; Blue Yonder Films, Tulsa, OK; C.A. Prod., NY, NY; Jonathan Cohen, NY, NY; Creative Image Enterprises, Miami, FL; Dasistas Creative Group, Madison, WI; Douglas, Garman, Rothacken, NY, NY; Ericson Media Inc., NY, NY; FPG Int'l, NY, NY; Films Transit, Montreal, Quebec; 40 Acres & a Mule, Brooklyn, NY; Greenwood/Cooper Home Video, Los Angeles, CA; Irivne Pictures, NY, NY; JVC Prod., NY, NY; KJM3 Entertainment Group, NY, NY; Lonsdale Prod., Glendale, CA; Loose Moon Prod., NY, NY; Joseph W. McCarthy, Brooklyn, NY; Mikco, NY, NY; NYTV, NY, NY; On Top Prod., Haverhill, MA; Passporte Prod., NY, NY; Barbara Roberts, NY, NY; Sandbank Films, Hawthorne, NY; Robert L. Seigel, Esq., NY, NY; Shurr Prod., Portland, OR; TV 17, Madison, AL; Telluride Film Fest., Telluride, CO; Tribune Pictures, NY, NY; Unapix Entert., Inc.; NY, NY; Video Utah!, Salt Lake City, UT; Washington Square Films, NY, NY; Westend Films, NY, NY; White Night Prod., San Diego, CA; WNET/13, NY, NY.

Nonprofit Members

ACES Media Arts Cen., New Haven, CT; ACS Network Prod., Washington, DC; AVD Hans Strom Biblioteket, Volda, Norway; AVFN Int'l, Anchorage, AK; Alternate Current, NY, NY; The American Cen., Paris, FR; American Civil Liberties Union, NY, NY; Ann Arbor Community Access TV, Ann Arbor, MI; Ann Arbor Film Fest., Ann Arbor, MI; Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY; John Armstrong, Brooklyn, NY; Art Matters Inc., NY, NY; The Asia Society, NY, NY; Assemblage, NY, NY; Athens Cen. for Film & Video, Athens, OH; Benton Fdn., Washington, DC; Blackside, Inc., Boston, MA; CNC, Washington, DC; Carnegie Inst., Pittsburgh, PA; Carved Image Prod., NY, NY; Cen. for Investigative Reporting, San Francisco, CA; Cen. for New American Media, NY, NY; Chicago Video Project, Chicago, IL; Coe Film Ass., NY, NY; Colelli Prod., Columbus, OH; Columbia College, Chicago, IL; Command Commun., Rye Brook, NY; Commun. Arts, Old Westbury, NY; Commun. Arts-MHCC, Gresham, OR; Community Television Network, Chicago, IL; Denver Film Society, Denver, CO; Duke Univ., Durham, NC; Dyke TV, NY, NY; Eclipse Commun., Springfield, MA; Educational Video Cen., NY, NY; Edwards Films, Eagle Bridge, NY; Empowerment Project/Kasper & Trent, Chapel Hill, NC; Eximus Company, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Fallout Shelter Prod., Mansfield, OH; The Film Crew, Woodland Hills, CA; Fox Chapel High School, Pittsburgh, PA; Great Lakes Film & Video, Milwaukee, WI; ITVS, St. Paul, MN; Idaho State Univ., Pocatello, ID; Image Film Video Cen., Atlanta, GA; Int'l Audiochrome, Rye, NY; Int'l Cultural Prgm, NY, NY; Int'l Film Seminars, NY, NY; Jewish Film Fest., Berkeley, CA; The Jewish Museum, NY, NY; KPBS, San Diego, CA; Komplex Studio Merdeka, Selangor, Malaysia; Little City Fdn./Media Arts, Palatine, IL; Long Bow Group Inc., Brookline, MA; Manhattan Neighborhood Network, NY, NY; Media Arts, Palatine, IL; Media Resource Centre, Adelaide, Australia; Mesilla Valley Film Society, Mesilla, NM; Milestone Entertainment, Irving, TX; Miranda Smith Prod., Boulder, CO; Missoula Community Access, Missoula MT; NAMAC, Oakland, CA; Nat. Cen. for Film & Video Preservation, Los Angeles, CA; Nat. Latino Community Cente/KCET, Los Angeles, CA; Nat. Video Resources, NY, NY; Neighborhood Film/Video Project, Philadelphia, PA; Neon, Inc., NY, NY; New Image Prod., Las Vegas, NV; New Liberty Prod., Philadelphia, PA; NY Inst. of Technology, Old Westbury, NY; Ohio Arts Council, Columbus, OH; Ohio Univ., Athens, OH; One Eighty One Prod., NY, NY; Outside in July, NY, NY; Pennsylvania State Univ., Univ. Park, PA; Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Pittsburgh, PA; Post Modern Prod., Lisle, IL; Pro Videographers, Morton Grove, IL; Promontory Point Films, Albany, NY; Rainy States Film Fest., Seattle, WA; Merlina Rich, NY, NY; Paul Robeson Fund/Funding Exchange, NY, NY; Ross Film Theater, Lincoln, NE; Ross-Gafney, NY, NY; San Francisco Art Inst., San Francisco, CA; School of the Art Inst., Chicago, IL; Scribe Video Cen., Philadelphia, PA; Southwest Alternate Media Project, Houston, TX; Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, NY; Strato Films, Hollywood, CA; Sundance Inst., Los Angeles, CA; SUNY/Buffalo-Dept. Media Studies, Buffalo, NY; Swiss Inst., NY, NY; Terrace Films, Brooklyn, NY; Thurston Community Television Archive, Los Angeles, CA; Trinity Square Video, Toronto, Ontario; Tucson Community Cable Corp., Tucson, AZ; UCLA Film & Television Archive, Los Angeles, CA; UMAB/School of Social Work Media Cen., Baltimore, MD; Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Univ. of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI; Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE; Univ. of Southern Florida, Tampa, FL; Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI; VA Fest. of American Film, Charlottesville, VA; V.I.E.W. Video, NY, NY; Vancouver Film School, Vancouver, BC; Veritas Int'l, Elsah, IL; Video Data Bank, Chicago, IL; Video Pool, Winnipeg, Manitoba; WNET/13, NY, NY; WTTW/Chicago, Chicago, IL; W. Hollywood Public Access, West Hollywood, CA; Wexner Cen., Columbus, OH; Women Make Movies, NY, NY; York Univ. Libraries, North York, Ontario.







BY PAMELA CALVERT

WINTER EVENTS

PANEL DISCUSSION - SMALL FORMAT VIDEO: THE FUTURE OF DOCUMENTARY?

Presented at Showbiz Expo '96

Small format video documentary is enjoying a place in the sun right now, from the Sundance success and theatrical release of *Jupiter's Wife* to the new PBS series *E.C.U.* Is this just a sign of the lean-and-mean times, or the shape of things to come? Panelists will explore the technical, financial, formal, and political challenges at the vanguard of the camcorder revolution. You'll also see demos of some of the new equipment reaching the market right now.

Moderator: Pamela Calvert, Director of Programs and Services, AIVF/FIVF. *Panelists:* Doug Block (co-producer, *Jupiter's Wife*; co-producer, *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*; producer/director, *The Heck With Hollywood!*); Judith Helfand (co-producer, *The Uprising of '34*, producer/director, *A Healthy Baby Girl*); David Leitner (associate producer, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*; director, *Vienna Is Different*; co-producer, *For All Mankind*; former technical director, DuArt Film Laboratory); Ellen Schneider (executive producer, *E.C.U.*; executive director, The American Documentary).

When: Saturday, January 6, 10:00 a.m.
Where: Showbiz Expo, New York Hilton
Price: $28 advance; $35 on-site

AIVF members receive complimentary VIP admission to Showbiz Expo, but you must register for panels and seminars separately. We have passes and registration materials in the office, or you may call Showbiz Expo directly: (800) 331-5706.



"IN THE WORKS" OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

Responding to popular demand, we are starting a works-in-progress program for members. We'll be combining open screening programs with ones featuring invited works, and developing it month-by-month to serve the needs and interests of the members. Our first two are scheduled for January 16 and February 20 at 7:00 p.m. in our offices. So call membership coordinator Leslie Fields to show your work, or come and see what's in the pipeline. *Five 10-minute slots per evening will be assigned on a first-registered, first-served basis, and are available to AIVF members only. You do not need to register or be a member to attend.*
When: Tuesday, January 16; Tuesday, February 20, 7:00 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Contact: Leslie Fields, (212) 807-1400 x 222

MEET AND GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF offices. *Free; open to AIVF members only. RSVP required.*

FISCAL SPONSORS
A different kind of meet and greet! Find out how your production can become eligible for grants through nonprofit fiscal sponsorship. Representatives of the ***New York Foundation for the Arts***, ***Women Make Movies***, ***Third World Newsreel***, ***Millennium***, *and* ***Media Network*** *will provide information on their sponsorship programs, project acceptance criteria, services and fees.*
Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 pm

SUSAN GLATZER
Director of Acquisitions, ***October Films***
Film distribution company representing independent features in North American markets.
Thursday, March 14, 6:30 pm

SPECIAL BOSTON EVENT

We have three special events to announce for February in Massachusetts, co-sponsored by AIVF/FIVF and the Newton Television Foundation. First, a book launch party for our new edition of *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos*, at NTF on Friday evening, February 2. AIVF staff will attend, joined by the book's omnitalented editor, Morrie Warshawski. Then, on Saturday February 3, Morrie will lead an all-day fundraising workshop in Boston based on his best-selling *Shaking the Money Tree: How to Get Grants and Donations for Film and Video*. And finally, the workshop will be repeated on Sunday, February 4 at Hampshire College. Thanks to the generous support of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts, the workshops can be offered at the extraordinarily low price of $20! For more information or to register, call Susan Walsh at Newton Television Foundation, (617) 965-8477.

OFFICE ORIENTATION

Come to our office to learn about the organization's services, meet the membership program staff, and be introduced to the resource library. *RSVP appreciated.*
When: Tuesday, February 13, 6:00 pm.
Where: AIVF Office

Transit information to the new office: We are at 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., on the east side of the street between Spring and Vandam, four blocks south of Houston. (Hudson is the equivalent of 8th Ave., on the west side of lower Manhattan.) The nearest subways are: **C** or **E** to **Spring St.**, walk 2 blocks west to Hudson; **1** or **9** to **Houston**, walk 1 block west to Hudson and 4 blocks south to Spring.

"MANY TO MANY" MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is a monthly opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Austin, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations
Book launch party at Newton Television Foundation for *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos*, and *Shaking the Money Tree* workshops in Boston and Western Mass. with Morrie Warshawski February 2-4!
Contact: Susan Walsh (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Kansas City, MO:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Los Angeles, CA:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Swing Cafe, 8543 Santa Monica Blvd.
Contact: Pat Branch, (310) 289-8612

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations

Continued on p. 78

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Downtown Community TV Center and Electric Film are located at 87 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10013 fax (212)219-0248

New York- **DCTV's** free classes and low cost equipment access have been attracting huge crowds to the historic firehouse on Lafayette Street.

When **DCTV** announced almost free Avid instruction & editing,community producers packed the sidewalk trying to get into the newly renovated building.

Despite warnings from the police, **Electric Film** has simultaneously opened newly installed Avid off-line and on-line editing suites with res 27 & amazing 3D-DVE. Interformat suite and inexpensive Betacam packages already make crowd control a daily problem. People can call DCTV at **1-800-VIDEONY** or **(212)966-4510** & Electric Film at **1-800-TAPELESS** or **(212)925-3429.**

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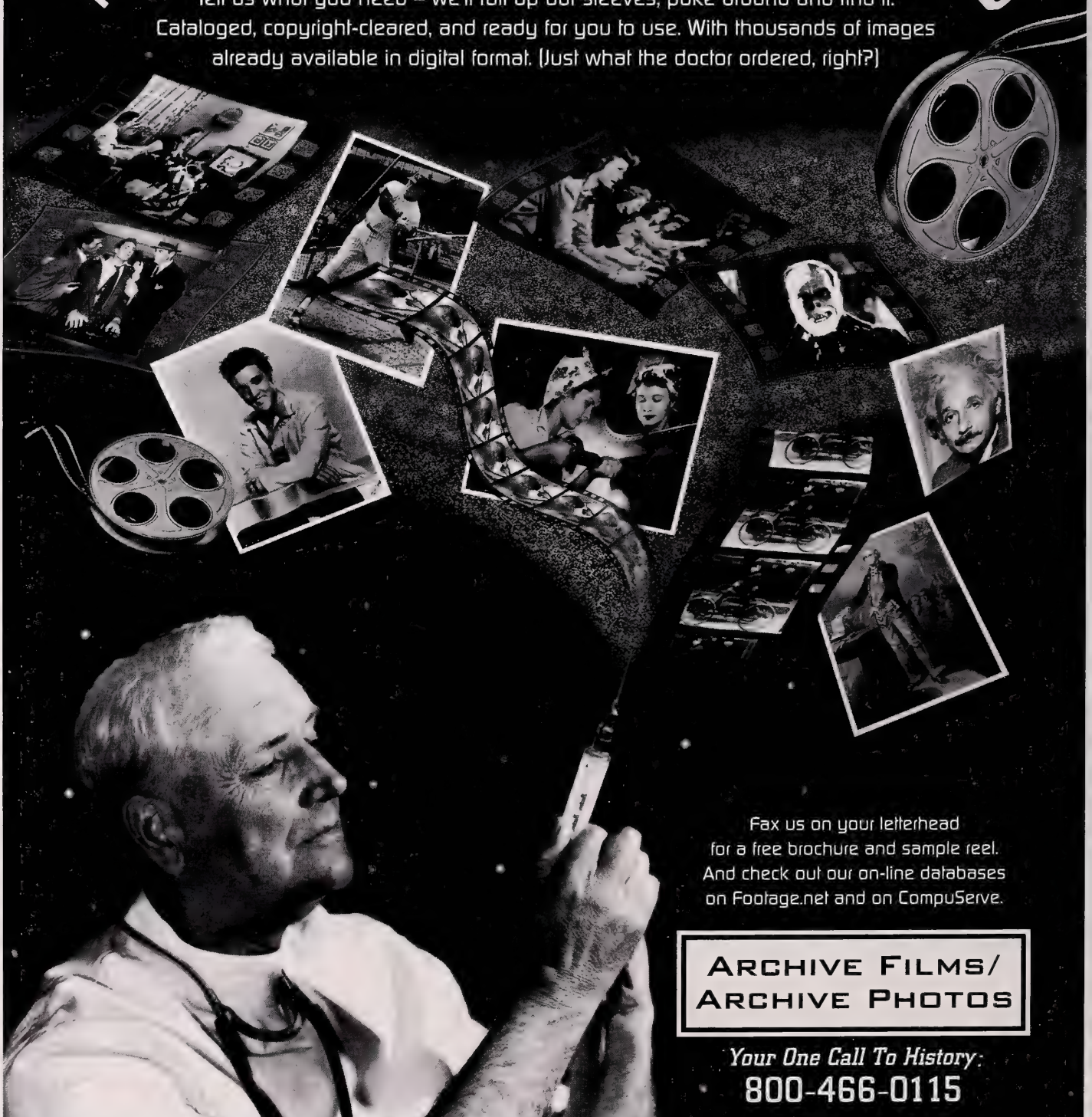
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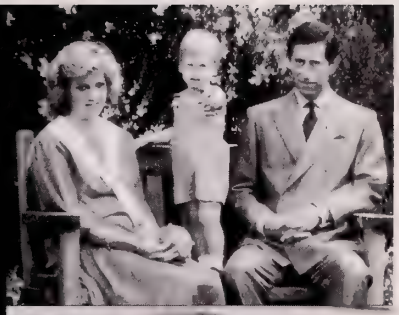
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MARCH 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2

Publisher: Ruby Lerner
Editor: Patricia Thomson
Managing Editor: Sue Young Wilson
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National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Fine Print (800) 874-7082; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent film and video, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@ aol.com. Second Class Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013.

Publication of *The Independent* is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Publication of any advertisement in *The Independent* does not constitute an endorsement. AIVF/FIVF are not responsible for any claims made in an ad.

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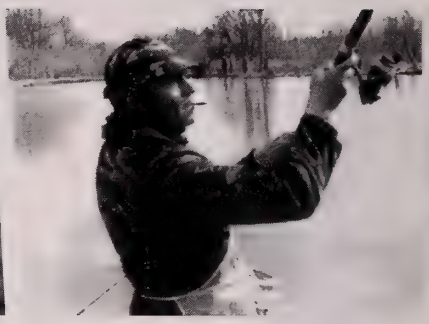
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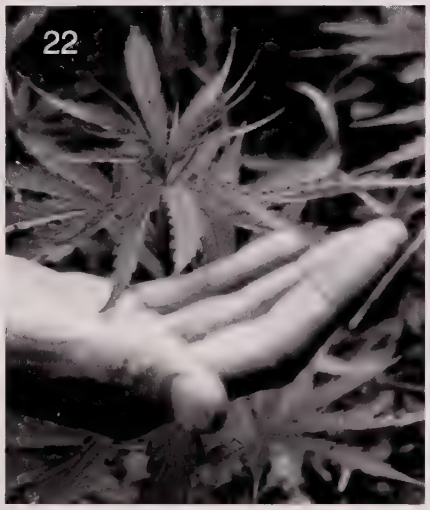
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Photo courtesy the Center for New American Media

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AIVF ADVOCACY

Advocacy Groups

The '96 elections offer a chance for artists, arts organizations and audiences to fight back and reverse some of the recent damage done to public arts funding. Now is the time to join forces and advocate for a public sector commitment to arts and culture. Get involved. The following advocacy organizations are a good place to start:

Access For All
Mona Jimenez: Media Alliance (212) 560-2919
Barry Lasky: Artswire (212) 366-6900

An ad hoc coalition of diverse media and public interest groups in New York working toward a more equitable distribution of communications resources. The group holds workshops and meetings on a regular basis.

Alliance for Community Media (ACM)
Executive Director: Barry Forbes
666 11th Street, N.W., Suite 806
Washington, D.C. 20001-4542
(202) 393-2650; fax: (202) 393-2653
AllianceCM@aol.com

ACM represents the interests of over 950 public, educational and governmental (PEG) access organizations, local origination cable TV stations, government regulators, libraries, and other nonprofit groups dedicated to providing electronic media access. Publishes several pamphlets, books and directories, as well as a bi-monthly media review. ACM also hosts an annual conference.

American Arts Alliance (AAA)
Acting Executive Director: Lee Kessler
1319 F Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 737-1727; fax: (202) 628-1258
aaa@artswire.org; WWW address: http:\\www.tmn.com/Artswire/www/aaa/aaahome.html

AAA is an advocate for more than 2,600 nonprofit arts institutions nationwide focusing on such issues as NEA funding, freedom of expression & increased federal funding for the arts. Publishes a monthly legislative update.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Director: Marjorie Heins
Arts Censorship Project
132 West 43rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10036
(212) 944-9800; fax: (212) 869-4314

The ACLU is a public interest organization devoted to protecting basic civil liberties. The Arts Censorship Project engages in legal advocacy and public education in defense of artistic freedom on such issues as arts funding, censorship of the electronic media, and obscenity laws.

American Council for the Arts (ACA)
Director of Programs: Lissa Rosenthal
1 East 53rd Street, 2nd fl.
New York, NY 10022-4201
(212) 223-2787; fax: (212) 223-4415
WWW address: http://www.artsusa.org/

ACA's mission is to promote public policies that advance and document the contributions of the arts and artists to American life. Through its Arts USA website, Arts USA Update Publication, FaxAlert Service, and its annual Advocacy Day, ACA helps to mobilize immediate constituent response to pending arts legislation.

Artswire (at New York Foundation for the Arts)
Barry Lasky, David Green
155 Avenue of the Americas, 14th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10013
(212) 366-6900; fax: (212) 366-1778
WWW address: http://www.artswire.org/Artswire www/awfront.html

A nationwide communications network. Creates an on-line space for discussion and advocacy about arts and cultural issues.

Association of Independent Video & Filmmakers (AIVF); Executive Director: Ruby Lerner
304 Hudson Street, 6th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10013
(212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519
aivffivf@aol.com; WWW address: http://www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF

With a membership of over 5,000 independent media producers, AIVF is a leading advocate for independents' access to public and private funding, and to distribution opportunities through public television and cable systems, as well as to theaters, museums, galleries, educational institutions and community organizations across the country. Advocates for equitable access to all resources. Through its affiliate, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the organization publishes several resource guides and this monthly magazine, The Independent.

Benton Foundation
Andrew Blau, David Weiner
1634 Eye Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 638-5770; fax: (202) 638-5771
benton@benton.org; WWW address: http://cdinet.com/benton

The Benton Foundation's Communications Policy Project promotes public interest values and noncommercial services for the National Information Infrastructure (NII) through research, policy analysis, print, video, and on-line publishing, and does outreach to nonprofits and foundations. Provides on-line advocacy updates on telecommunications issues.

Center for Media Education
Executive Director: Jeffery Chester
1511 K Street, N.W., Suite 518
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 628-2620; fax: (202) 628-2554

Advocates for the democratic use of electronic media. Three current projects: Campaign for Kids' Television; Children & the Information Superhighway; The Future of Media. Publishes numerous articles and papers on telecommunications policy as well as a quarterly newsletter.

Media Access Project (MAP)
Andrew Schwartzman, Gigi Sohn & Jill Lesser
2000 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 232-4300; fax: (202) 466-7656

MAP is a public interest telecommunications law firm that represents the rights of members of the public to

speak and receive information free of censorship and with unfettered access. Communications policy litigation at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and in federal court.

Media Coalition
Executive Director: Chris Finan
139 Fulton Street, Suite 302
New York, NY 10038
(212) 587-4025; fax: (212) 587-2436

An anti-censorship group that represents trade associations in the publishing, book selling, recording and video industries. Publishes occasional reports on censorship.

MeDIA Consortium
Project Director: David Le Page
4302 Halfe Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22309
(703) 780-1160 voice/fax
mediacnsrt@aol.com

MeDIA is a national consortium representing independent, minority and community media and arts service organizations and individuals. MeDIA's mission is to promote freedom of expression, and to advocate for equity and access in telecommunications and media arts policy.

National Alliance for Media Arts & Culture (NAMAC); National Director: Julian Low
655 13th Street, Suite 201
Oakland, California 94612
(510) 451-2717; fax: (510) 451-2715

NAMAC, which represents 200 diverse media arts groups, focuses on making media arts organizations an integral part of the community, while promoting media literacy and the humane uses of, and individual access to, current and future media technologies, and encouraging a global outlook in the media community. Publishes a monthly bulletin, provides information on the media arts and hosts bi-annual conferences.

Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT); Executive Director: Frank Blythe
1800 North 33rd Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68583
(402) 472-3522; fax: (402) 472-8675
fblythe@unlinfo.unl.edu

The mission of NAPT is to inform, educate and encourage the awareness of tribal histories, cultures, languages, opportunities and aspirations through the participation of American Indians and Alaska Natives in creating and employing all forms of educational and public telecommunications programs and services. NAPT publishes a quarterly newsletter.

National Artists Advocacy Group (NAAG)
Contact Person: Helen Brunner
918 F Street, N.W., Suite 610
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 393-2787; fax: (202) 347-7376

NAAG is a confederation of diverse organizations of artists, cultural workers and audiences focused on building a cohesive, progressive movement to fight the attacks on artists and culture at the local, state & national level. Advocates around issues of freedom of expression, information superhighway, intellectual property & copyright, health care & public arts fundings. NAAG will be joining forces with other organizations during the '96 election year to register voters and provide voter education.

National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA)
Executive Director: DeeAnn Borshay
346 Ninth Street, 2nd fl.
San Francisco, California 94103
(415) 863-0814; fax: (415) 863-7428

National media arts organization that supports work that is by and about Asian Americans and Asians. Three main areas of focus: public TV programming; educational distribution; exhibition. Publishes quarterly newsletter.

National Association of Artists' Organizations (NAAO); Director: Helen Brunner
918 F Street N.W., Suite 611
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 347-6350; fax: (202) 347-7376
naao@artswire.org

NAAO serves and promotes artist-run organizations and advocates for artistic freedom of expression. Publishes quarterly bulletin and bi-annual directory, and provides fax alerts on arts issues.

National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC)
Executive Director: Mable Haddock
929 Harrison Avenue, Suite 101
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 299-5355; fax: (614) 299-4761
NBPC@supptec.com.; WWW address: WWW.-SUPPTEC.COM/BUSINESS/NBPC.

NBPC is a nonprofit organization that focuses on fostering and encouraging programming about Black people worldwide. NBPC funds several new projects a year and offers these programs for presentation to the PBS national primetime schedule. Publishes two quarterly newsletters: Take I *and* Take II.

National Campaign for Freedom of Expression (NCFE); Executive Director: David Mendoza
918 F Street, N.W., Suite 609
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 393-2787; fax: (202) 347-7376

West coast office:
1402 Third Avenue, Suite 421
Seattle, Washington 98101
(206) 340-9301
dmendoza@artswire.org & jwood@arts wire.org
WWW Address: http://www.tmn.com/Artswire/www/ncfe/ncfe.html

NCFE is an education and advocacy network of artists, arts organizations and the public, founded to fight censorship and to protect First Amendment rights to freedom of artistic expression. NCFE produces a quarterly bulletin and legislative update videos.

Free Expression Network (FEN)
An ad hoc coalition of groups that meet every 8 to 10 weeks. Operates out of NCFE office. Distributes the Free Expression Resource Directory.

National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB); Director: Lynn Chadwick
Fort Mason Center, Building D
San Francisco, California 94123
(415) 771-1160; fax: (415) 771-4343
NFCB@aol.com

A national membership and service organization for community radio. Represents 200 member stations and the field to national policy and funding organizations, like the Federal Communications Commission and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Publishes monthly newsletter, public radio legal handbook & a production textbook.

National Latino Communications Center (NLCC)
Executive Director: Jose Luis Ruiz
3171 Los Feliz Boulevard, Suite 201
Los Angeles, California 90039
(213) 663-8294; fax: 663-5606

Established in 1975, the NLCC is the only nonprofit media arts production resource center in the country dedicated solely to creating access for, and providing funding support to, Latino media artists in public broadcasting. NLCC is the largest single supplier of Latino programming for public television. To date, over 60 projects have been funded, including dramas, documentaries and performance works.

Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIIC)
Executive Director: Lurline McGregor
1221 Kapi`olani Boulevard, Suite 6A-4
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
(808) 591-0059; fax: (808) 591-1114
piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu

PIIC is a nonprofit national media organization whose goal is to increase nationally broadcast public television programs produced by indigenous Pacific Islanders about the cultures and the peoples of the Pacific Islands, including Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Marianas, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. PIIC assists in the marketing and distribution of Pacific Islander projects.

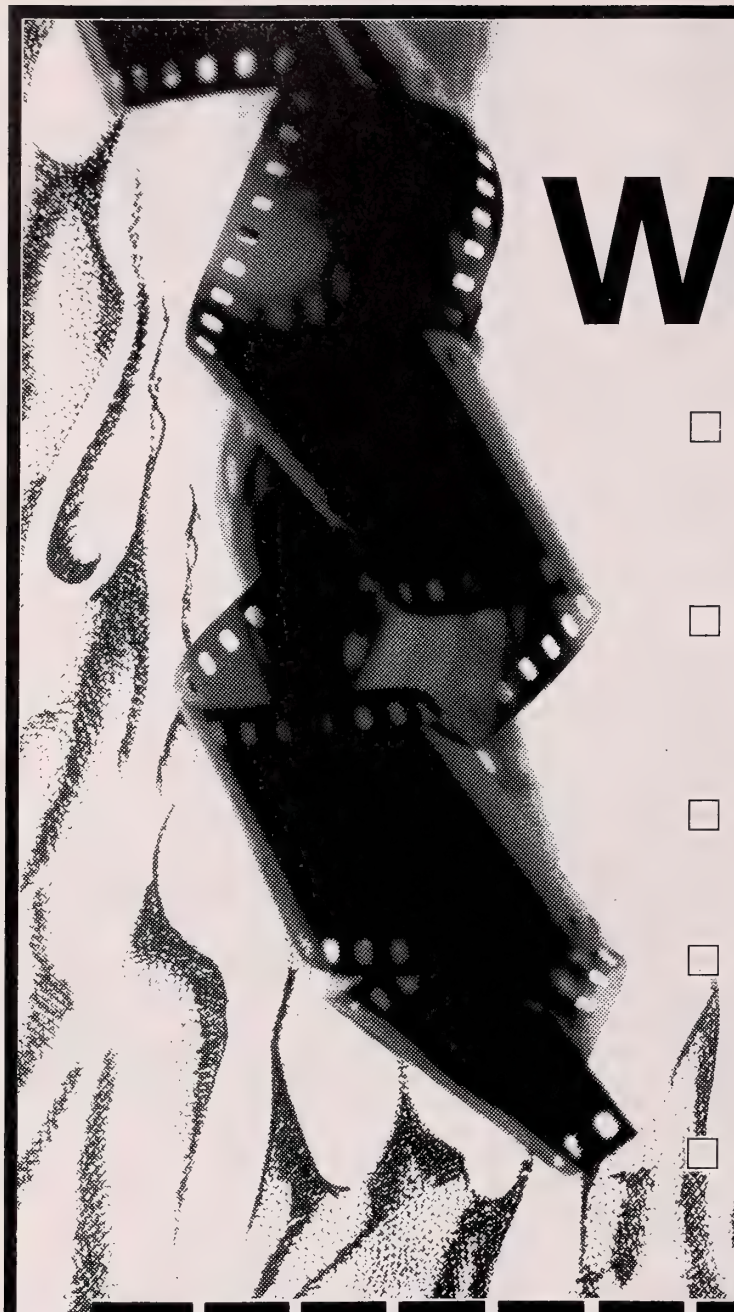
People for the American Way/Artsave (PFAW)
Director: Anne Green
2000 M Street, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 467-4999; fax: (202) 293-2672

PFAW advocates for freedom of expression, freedom of religion and a respect for cultural pluralism. The Artsave project monitors, publicizes and counters attacks on artistic expression through legal and technical assistance to artists and arts institutions. Distributes several publications and position papers.

Vote USA
Contact Person: Helen Brunner
c/o National Artists Advocacy Group (NAAG)
918 F Street, N.W., Suite 610
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 393-2787; fax: (202) 347-7376

Vote USA is a coalition of a wide range of national nonprofit organizations. The coalition was created to encourage national & local nonprofit organizations to join the effort to register the more than 65 million unregistered, eligible voters by making voter registration a part of nonprofits' routine, on-going activities. Vote USA membership includes national health & human services, arts, civil rights, media and technology & educational groups.

— Compiled by Cleo Cacoulidis



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Public TV Charts Survival Course

Media News

EDITED BY SUE YOUNG WILSON

PUBLIC BROADCASTERS ARE STARTING TO CIRcle the wagons. Having narrowly dodged a bullet last year when Congress reversed itself and decided to keep funding the Corporation for Public Broadcasting after all, both America's Public Television Stations (APTS), public television's lobbying arm, and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) have launched formal planning efforts to reconfigure what are currently fragmented decision-making and governance procedures.

"We want to find out how public broadcasting . . . will operate fifteen to twenty years from now," says Joseph Traigle, chair of the APTS committee that is in the process of hiring a consulting firm to conduct the study. "How will we make decisions and plan for that future? What is the process by which an extremely diverse group of radio and television stations come together as institutions, not only to reach decisions, but to implement those decisions, to bring them to closure?"

The consulting firm, scheduled to be chosen in February (after press time), will be asked to propose a number of different options for new decision-making procedures.

Adds Traigle, the former chairman of Louisiana Public Broadcasting, "When we analyze what happened to us last year, we all know that we could, should, and must be better organized if we're going to continue to survive." The APTS trustees decided to launch the study last year after some of the trustees and station members the organization had brought to Washington lobbied Congress for the right to carry advertising—a Republican-friendly position contrary to APTS's official line—showing that public broadcasters cannot present a united front even on crucial lobbying issues.

One of the future issues that PBS and APTS will have to face is the transition to digital technology, whose options range from digital delivery platforms that are still on the horizon (so-called "Advanced TV" and "video dialtone") to broadcast alternatives, such as CD-ROM and the World Wide Web, that have already arrived.



PBS enters cyberspace with a new World Wide Web site.

MCI, for example, has committed a minimum of $15 million to PBS over the next five years for the development of CD-ROMs based on the network's programming and for the expansion of the new PBS Online Web site. But will others in the public broadcasting community, lacking the institutional clout of PBS, be able to afford the inevitable transition from analog to digital? And even if they do, will the new regulatory landscape (the overhaul of the Communications Act of 1934 with which Congress has been wrestling for over two years) offer the same kind of protected status that noncommercial broadcasters have enjoyed in the past? Or will public broadcasters have to rely more heavily on "enhanced underwriting," those little "thank-you"s at programs' end that begin to look increasingly like advertising?

In anticipation of this dizzying future, PBS chairman Gerald L. Baliles has also formed a study group of present and past board members to address "both governance reform and strategic business planning," as he wrote in a letter to public broadcasters last October, to tackle the thorny issues of PBS's relationship to its member stations and its financial problems. The network is getting input from accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick.

"As a collective," Baliles admitted in the letter, "we are plagued by years-old arguments that have never been resolved. We are wary, at best, about our own governance system. Even the principle of majority rule is not well-established within the membership; as a result, it would appear that some members assert the right of individual veto over even an overwhelming consensus of their colleagues. Clearly, we have not yet answered all of the questions that prevent us from aligning our resources and our talents toward a new future."

He vowed to later expand the group "in steadily widening circles . . . to station general managers, to lay leaders and, finally, to business leaders and policy experts who share our commitment to secure our future."

It's still too early to tell what changes will result from either study; APTS's Traigle stresses that any modification of the mechanics of the organization's decision-making is in the early "planting" stage, far from harvest.

Some independent producers already express concern, however, over the nature of the discussions. "Right now," observes James Yee, executive director of the Independent Television Service (ITVS), "the focus seems to be on infrastructure issues, rather than on content or access issues. When content comes up at all, it's mentioned only tangentially." As the

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source of some of the most innovative programming that appears on public television, St. Paul-based ITVS wants assurance that the ongoing APTS and PBS strategy efforts acknowledge the diversity of viewpoint and independence of spirit that are central to the mission of public broadcasting.

However important issues of technology and revenue may be, in the final analysis, according to Yee, it is the ability of public broadcasting to offer an alternative—withstanding market pressures and rising above the mainstream—that makes the planning discussions worth having in the first place. "Both APTS and PBS must confront the issue of content, the nature of programming in public broadcasting, in their planning studies," Yee insists. "If they don't raise it, we will. It's simply that important."

GARY O. LARSON

Gary O. Larson is a freelance writer based in Washington, D.C.

Save That Video!

The Library of Congress will conduct public hearings in three cities this spring in order to elicit both oral and written testimony on the importance of video and television preservation.



The hearings will be held in Los Angeles on March 6, in New York on March 20, and in Washington, D.C. on March 26, according to William Murphy, director of the fact-finding study. Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, apparently taking a keen interest in the subject, will serve as chair at all three hearings.

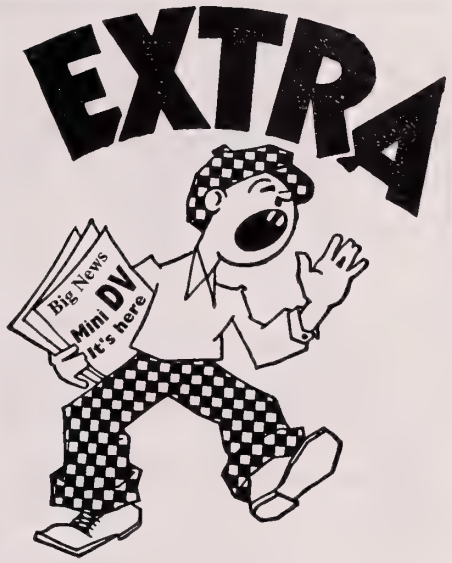
Murphy, who is on loan to the library from the National Archives, is founding president of the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA), a national organization of archivists concerned with film and video preservation. He helped prepare the National Archives' testimony for a 1993 film preservation study and served on the preservation task force.

Murphy hopes to get a wide variety of views from organizations and individuals interested in the preservation of "our television heritage," he says. He has targeted local and national broadcasters, including public broadcasting stations, and program producers ranging from Hollywood studios to low-budget independents, video artists, and community producers. Spokespersons for documentary, news, and public affairs programs will be as important as those on the entertainment side of television, Murphy asserts. Federal and state television archives, university-based archives, historical society archives, and stock footage libraries, will also participate, as well as museums and special collections. Murphy is also seeking individual researchers and scholars who use video materials to articulate reasons why video has educational, cultural, and research value.

The latter is an important point because the Library of Congress' 1993 study of American film preservation readily assumed public acceptance of the importance of ensuring a future for historic film. That case has yet to be made for television and video recordings. Murphy observes that, given the ephemeral nature of television programming, the viewing public has given little thought to the preservation of video programs, often assuming it's all being handled by the networks. He says there's a need for a nationwide program to educate the public and stimulate interest and support for video preservation; one of the hearings' first goals is to gather entertaining ideas on how to raise public awareness. (The American Film Institute's success in raising consciousness about the problems of nitrate film points up the kind of work that needs to be done to get television history taken seriously.)

In-house, the study is known as "the American Television Project." Asked if the concerns of independent video artists, documentarians, and community video practitioners stand a chance of being heard amid the thundering chorus of television industry representatives, Murphy says he is optimistic. He stresses the importance of the role that independent filmmakers like Fred Wiseman and administrators like Betsy McLane of the International Documentary Association played in the

MEDIA NEWS



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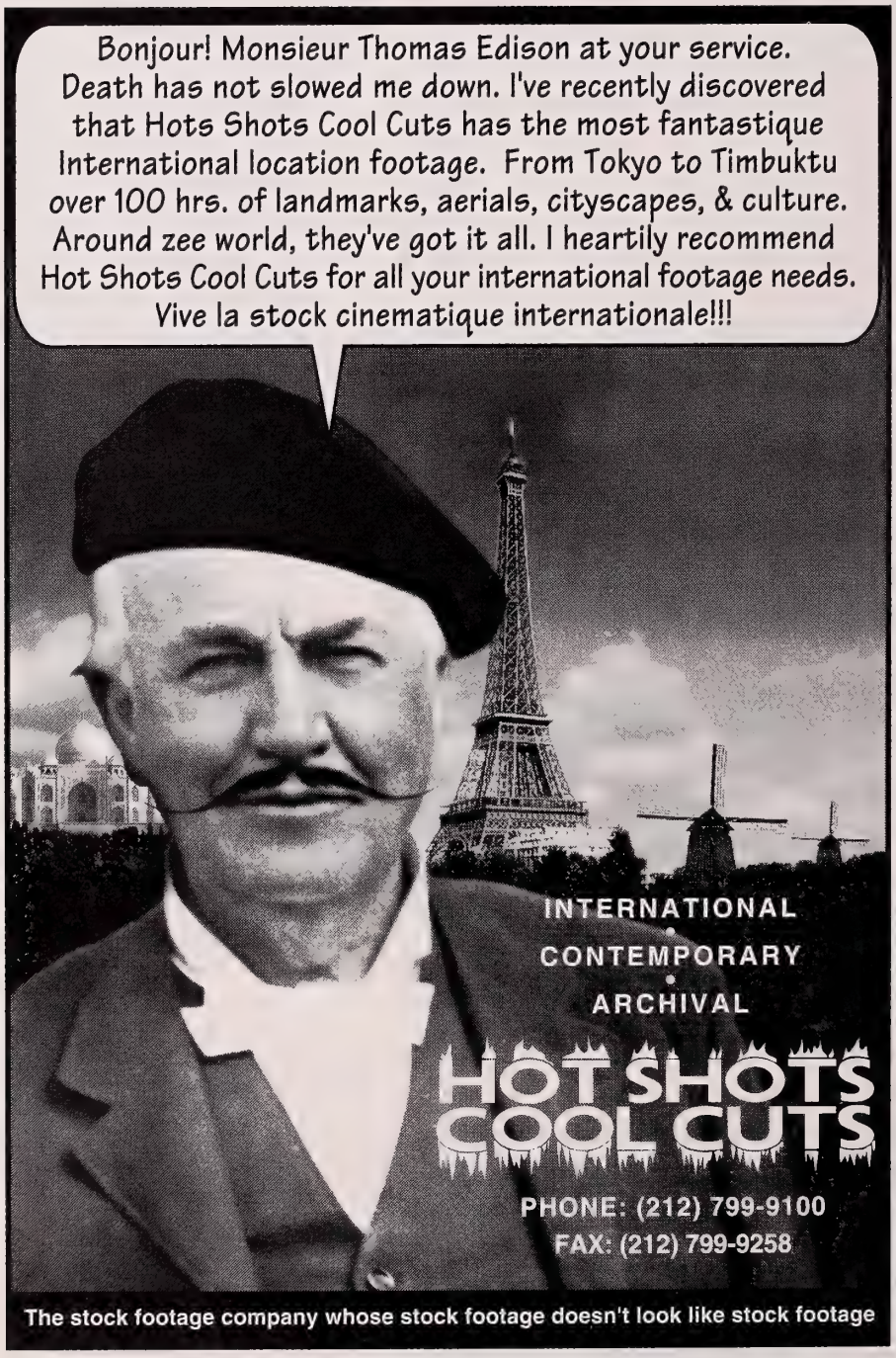
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library's 1993 film study, to which their testimony added needed balance. Murphy is looking for active participation from the independent video community; in January, he met with videomakers at Media Alliance in New York City.

While each hearing will cover roughly the same ground, the various locations will likely give rise to different discussions. In Los Angeles Murphy hopes to pull in Bay Area video artists as well as entertainment industry representatives. In New York he expects independent video spokespeople and representatives from cable companies; in Washington representatives from government, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and public affairs programs.

The Washington, D.C., hearing will be held at the Library of Congress; the other hearing sites are yet to be selected. All three will be open to the public. Those wishing to give oral or written testimony must make advance arrangements. The deadlines to testify in Los Angeles and New York have passed; Washington's is March 6. The deadline for written testimony has passed for Los Angeles; it is March 6 for New York and March 12 for Washington. Contact: William Murphy at (202) 707-5708 or Steve Leggett at (202) 757-5912 or write to Murphy at the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Radio Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. All testimony will be published in a comprehensive document tentatively titled *The State of American Television and Video Preservation.*

DEIRDRE BOYLE

Deirdre Boyle is a critic, curator, and teacher of independent film and video and the author of Guerilla Television Revisited *(Oxford, 1996).*

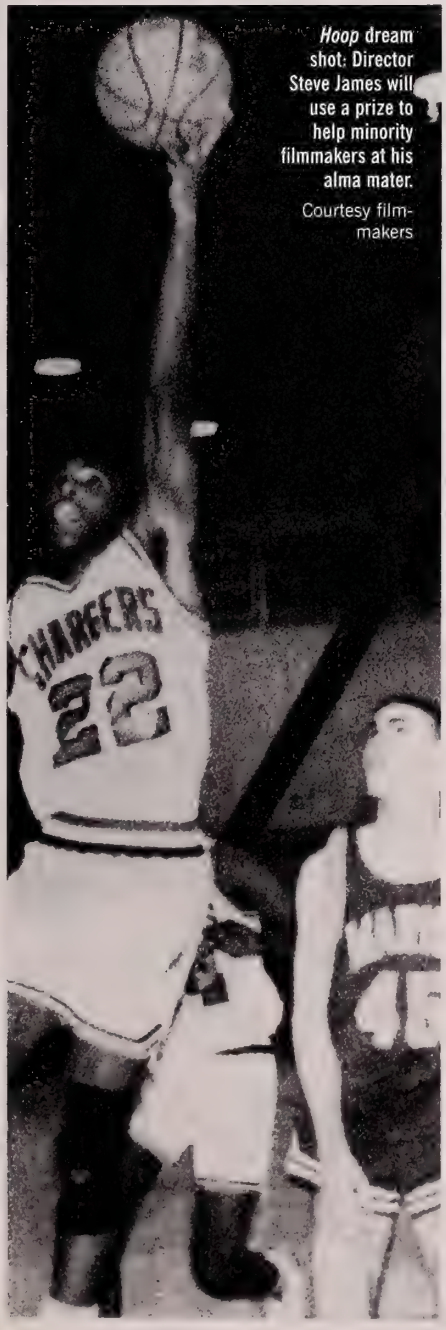
Hoop Dreams Director Funds Home Team Filmmakers

Steve James, director and co-producer of the Oscar-nominated documentary *Hoop Dreams*, has donated $5,000 to his alma mater, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, to set up a minority filmmakers award fund. Citing the low number of minority voices in the film industry, James announced in November 1995 that he would head the drive to raise additional money for the fund, which is designed to help minority students with aspirations in film.

James said he thought immediately of his alma mater when MTV awarded him $5,000 to give to a university of his choice as part of

its Best New Filmmaker of the Year award. *Hoop Dreams* chronicles the difficult lives of two Black Chicago teenagers and their quest for pro basketball fame.

"When I was at [SIUC], there were hardly any Black students in the cinema and photography department, because, I think, it was typically harder for the average Black student from Chicago to find the money to make a film in addition to the hurdle of tuition, room and board, and the other expenses in college," says the filmmaker, who received an M.F.A. from the school in 1984. "In general, I think, in film schools there's not the kind of ethnic representation that there could be."



***Hoop* dream shot: Director Steve James will use a prize to help minority filmmakers at his alma mater.**

Courtesy filmmakers

Gary Kolb, head of SIUC's cinema and photography department, says that the situation has not changed much since James attended the school, but he hopes that some of the lack will be offset by the scholarships, which are open to applicants from SIUC's racial and ethnic minority populations—chiefly Asian-Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics, according to Kolb.

Kolb says he hopes to bring in at least an additional $100,000 by targeting potential donors among celebrities, sports stars, business owners, and private foundations. With that amount, the department could establish an endowment that would award $2,000 production grants to two students annually.

Both James and Kolb want the fund to expand into a comprehensive program for minorities interested in film, movies, and other visual media. Eventually, the university would like to grant scholarships to filmmakers of color, hold an annual symposium, host workshops by visiting filmmakers, and endow a faculty chair.

SONIA SABNIS

Sonia Sabnis is a former editorial intern at The Independent.

One Less Pain in the IRS

Uncle Sam and his elves at the Internal Revenue Service put on their gift-giving caps for many mediamakers in 1995, restoring a freelance health insurance deduction and loosening receipt requirements for travel and entertainment expenses.

In April of last year, Congress restored the 25 percent health insurance deduction for self-employed people for the 1994 tax year. This means that if you paid for your own health insurance in 1994, were self-employed, and did not take the deduction, you can now file a 1994 amended return (form 1040X for federal returns; check with your state income tax office for the proper state form) and subtract 25 percent of your total health insurance premiums from your total income.

Do note that you can't, however, deduct your health insurance for any month that you or your spouse were covered under an employer's health plan, nor can the deduction be more than your net earnings as shown on your Schedule C.

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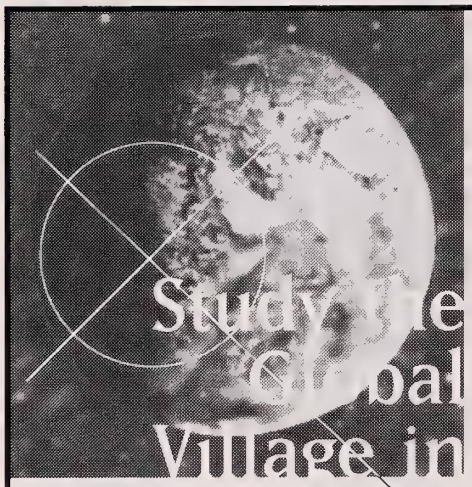
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was wrong, here's how to proceed: Write the phrase "SE health insurance" on the top of the notice, and send it back. That should set the matter to rest. If you've already responded to such a notice by paying additional tax or accepting a smaller refund, you'll have to file the amending forms to get the money back.

Even better news for tax year 1995: Thirty percent of your health insurance premium is deductible.



ALSO, AS OF October 1, 1995, the IRS raised to $75 the amount it will allow one to deduct as travel and entertainment expenses (except for lodging) without a receipt. Previously you needed a receipt for any such expense over $25. (The $75 figure does not apply to gifts, which still is limited to $25 per person per year.)

Because of the new rule's timing, you will have to meet the old requirement for expenses incurred before October 1; the new $75 rule applies for October 1-December 31 expenses.

The IRS still requires documentation about the purpose of an entertainment expense, the cost, and where, when, and with whom it took place. For travel expenses, documentation will still be required about the purpose of the trip and the nature of the expense.

The new rules create an attractive alternative to the U.S. food per diems, which run from $26-$38 per day, depending on the city to which you travel. If you are totally record-averse, however, you may still want to take the per diems because they require the least record keeping—although you still must have a record of the trip's purpose and a diary showing who you met and/or what you did. You cannot, at this time, take per diems some days and expenses other days for the same trip.

SUSAN LEE

Susan Lee, a New York tax consultant, has specialized in filmmaking-related taxation for more than 15 years.

Errata

In the article "Shorts Stories from Sundance," published in the January/February 1996 issue, the distributor for Terracino's short film *My Polish Waiter* was incorrectly identified. First Run Features is the distributor and will be releasing the film on video in July. *The Independent* regrets the error.

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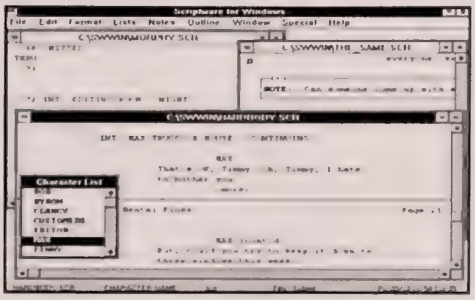
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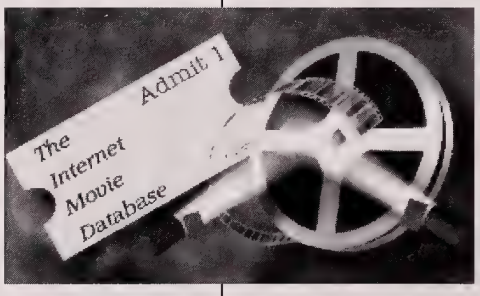
Wired Blue Yonder

SITE SEEING

A Tour of What's on the Web for Indie Media Makers

BY ANDREW GIANNELLI & SUE YOUNG WILSON

BY NOW, YOU'VE HEARD OF THE WORLD WIDE Web. You may have surfed it with all the eager curiousity of a wired-in fifteen-year-old. But whether you're a still-uncertain "newbie" or a cyber cowboy, you should know that the Web is loaded with a dazzling number of resources for indie film- and videomakers.



Here's a list of our picks of some of the most useful, exciting, and fun sites. The Web being the, well, web it is, these are just places to start. (And don't miss AIVF's new Web site, at http://www.virtual-film.com/AIVF/.)

Databases and Pages of Other Links

THE INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE

http://www.msstate.edu/Movies/

Billed as "the most comprehensive free source of movie information on the Internet," this is what it sounds like—a *huge* database of information on films, including many independents. Its creators boast on the home page, "If it's movie related, it might be quicker to ask, What's not here? There are tens of thousands of movies covered, from the earliest of silent movies to films still in production; biographies and filmographies on hundreds of thousands of actors, actresses, directors, and more; enough information to melt even the brain of a black belt in movie trivia; ratings and reviews.... [And] even some pictures and sounds thrown in for good measure."

CINEMEDIA

http://www.afionline.org/CINEMEDIA/CineMedia.home.html

"The Internet's largest film and media directory" includes separate pages on cinema, television, and new media. The cinema page offers you a further choice of links organized by topic: films, studios, actors, festivals, theaters, schools, production, organizations, history/research, and other indices of film-related sites (including many of the other sites listed here). Now you now why they call it "Web surfing"—hang ten, or you'll drown in the info ocean.

GUIDE TO FILM AND VIDEO RESOURCES ON THE NET

http://http2.sils.umich.edu/Public/fvl/film.html

An impressively researched directory of film-related resources on the Internet, assembled by Lisa R. Wood and Kristen Garlock at the University of Michigan's School of Information and Library Studies. They list sites on film, video, audio-visual resources, general media, and laserdisc for an audience "with academic, popular, and production interests in film," giving such useful information as a description of the site, access method, contact name, originating body/author, intended audience, and comments.

CLAMEN'S MOVIE INFORMATION COLLECTION

http://www-cgi.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/clamen/misc/movies/README.html

A good list of industry-related links, arranged by Stewart Clamen. It includes the titles of all the movies in the National Film Registry.

CINEMASPACE

http://cinemaspace.berkeley.edu/

This site is the home page for the UC/Berkeley Film Studies Program and is "devoted to all aspects of cinema and new media." It includes academic papers on film and new media, film theory and critique, multimedia "lectures," film clips, and links to other movie-related sites.

AMERICAN COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION'S FILM STUDIES PAGE

http://www.uark.edu/depts/comminfo/www/film.html

Yet another large list of movie-related sites, from that of the Alliance for Faith and Family for Movie Censorship to Women in TV and Film.

THE INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO MAKERS INTERNET RESOURCE GUIDE

http://mosaic.echonyc.com/%7Emvidal/Indi-Film+Video.html



Compiled by Mike Vidal, this site is an invaluable guide to resources on the Internet for the independent film and video community. It includes news and announcements on communications advocacy issues and links to advocacy organizations and government media regulators.

Film & Video Festivals

Putting information about your film or video festival on the World Wide Web is now "the thing to do." The larger, more established and celebrity-ridden festivals use the Web to convey the rush of being on the scene. Less

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Alternative Visions: Distributing Independent Video in a Home Video World by Debra Franco; $9.95 AIVF members; $12.95 others $_____

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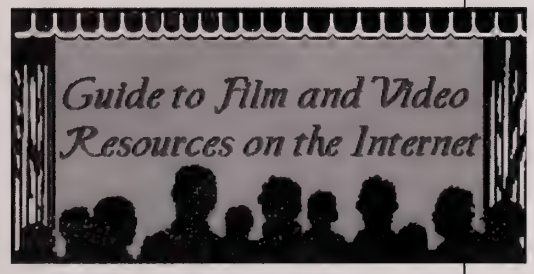
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schmoozy festivals use their Web pages to provide festival-goers with a digital catalogue of events. And other, virtual festivals that have no physical home are cropping up and taking place on the Web itself.

An Index of Film Festivals

http://www.laig.com/law/entlaw/filmfes.htm

Entertainment lawyer Mark Litwak maintains a comprehensive list of film and video festivals with a Web presence. Among his various links are four different sites about



Cannes (only one of them official).

The Usual Suspects:

Cannes: http://www.mhm.fr/festival/cannes/index.html

Berlin: http://fub46.zedat.fu-berlin.de:8080/~frs/bff-index.html
(An unofficial page maintained by a fan.)

London: http://www.ipmpcug.co.uk/lff.html

Sundance: http://www.sundance.org/sundance/institute/ceg2.html

Toronto: http://www.bell.cal/toronto/filmfest/

Unusual Suspects:

The Low Res Film and Video Festival

http://www.lowres.com/lowres/

The Low Res festival took place January 6 in New York and will be in San Francisco in October. Find the call for entries at the site.

MPEG Bizarre Film Festival (I'M BIFF)

http://www.perry.com/imb1ff/film.html

Most works created (off hours, one would hope) by grad students at academic computing labs. Our favorite: a computer-generated trip into a subunit of a fruit fly's ovary. Toto, I don't think we're in Cannes anymore.

The New York Quicktime Festival

http://www.users.interport.net/~adavi/NYQTFST3.HTML

This site showcases the works of those exploring and experimenting with creating moving images for viewing on computers only. Details for submitting work are posted at the Web site along with the highlights of last year's festival, held at Pratt Manhattan in New York.

UFVA Student Film & Video Festival

http://astro.temple.edu/~dkluft

In addition to information about the University Film Video Association (UFVA) festival, this site includes over 200 links to online film and video festivals and 500 links to film, video, and communication schools, programs, and departments.

The Virtual Film Festival

http:www.virtualfilm.com

Launched at the Toronto International Film Festival in September, 1995, the Virtual Film Festival exists only in cyberspace. But how can you have a virtual power lunch? The festival has addressed this concern by providing exclusive chat areas for qualifying members only. The site is being refined at press time and is scheduled to have a presence at IFFCON, Sundance, and Berlin and to appear at the Hot Docs Festival (March 21-24), whereafter it will be fully up and open to the public. And it's home to AIVF's and *The Independent*'s very own recently launched Web pages.

More Cool Stuff

Cyber Film School

http://www.io.org/~cincan/cfs/cfs.htm

Learn online-movie making—and moviemaking online. There are lots of hot links and great articles on filmmaking to be found at this site, which was selected fourth among *Computerlife* magazine's "101 Great Hangouts Online."

The Flicker Pages

http://www.sirius.com/~sstark/

San Franciscan Scott Stark's pages do a good job of providing resources to both artists and afficionados of experimental cinema.

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http://lcweb2.loc.gov/papr/mpixhome.html

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Screenedge

http://www.state51.co.uk/screenedge/

Screenedge is an example of the myriad independent film and video distribution companies that are attempting to reach audiences directly through the Web. Of course, use of the Internet to distribute video works themselves rather than quarter-screen 30-second clips and other shadows of the original, while inevitable, is not yet a reality.



Screenwriters Online

http://screenwriter.com/insider/news.html

Though you may have to wait a while for "GafferNet," the Internet and the Web have become resources for a) professionals involved in film and video production, b) those who *wish* to be professionally involved, and c) those who wish to *pretend* to be professionally involved. This site, maintained by Cinemedia, lets one interact with well known professional screenwriters and learn secrets of the trade.

Charles Deemer's Screenwriters and Playwrights Home Page

http://www.teleport.com/~cdeemer/scrwriter.html

The screenwriters' resources include "nuts & bolts info, from dramatic structure to format to marketing; Jack Stanley's Screenwriters FAQ; film databases; movie reviews; eclectic stuff from Godzilla to Hitchcock; tips from the pros on the craft and business of screenwriting; and more." A fascinating site.

Finding Web Sites for Yourself

Looking for the home page of a particular studio, film school, or current movie? The Web sites listed below are there to help you find other Web sites by doing searches on words and names. As you'd expect, these "search" sites are among the most frequently visited on the Web.

Yahoo: http://www.yahoo.com

Infoseek: http://www.infoseek.com

Webcrawler: http://www.webcrawler.com

Andrew Giannelli is a New York-based writer and Web developer. Sue Young Wilson is managing editor of The Independent.

Can't Get to the Web Yet? Here's What You Need....

Besides a computer with a fast modem, you'll need an Internet service provider who offers Web access and some special software.

The big online services such as America Online and Prodigy now generally offer Web access to their members; but to really surf the Web you'll probably want to get an Internet service provider who offers a kind of connection—called SLIP or PPP—that allows for much faster loading of Web pages. New service providers are cropping up like dandelions—check your local Yellow Pages. Prices for SLIP/PPP service are currently running around $15-$25/mo.

Finally, you'll need a kind of software called a "browser" to view the Web's graphics and navigate around it. Netscape Navigator is fast becoming the standard browser. (Your Internet service provider will probably include the browser software with your account.)



Surf's up!

GENDER BENDER

CYBER THEORIST SANDY STONE



BY NANCY BLESS

ALLUCQUÈRE ROSANNE (SANDY) STONE'S peripatetic life journey, from her origins as a nice Jewish boy from Weehawken, New Jersey, to her current status as the Goddess of Cyberspace, is reflected in her work history. Stone has been a recording engineer, a computer programmer, a phone sex worker in a lesbian separatist collective that services heterosexuals, a researcher for both the National Institute of Health and Bell Labs, a lecturer in the communication and sociology departments of the University of California at San Diego, and a science fiction novelist. She has a Ph.D. from the history of consciousness program at University of California at Santa Cruz and is currently an assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin, where she directs the Interactive Multimedia Laboratory and teaches multimedia production and the theory and practice of interactivity. Stone's work in sociology, neurology, popular culture, gender, and cyberspace make her a unique theorist and reporter on being human in the Information Age.

That's a fluid state, as Stone well knows, both from her personal experience as a transsexual and from close observation of the gender masquerades that go on so widely on the Internet. Stone was one of the first to study this aspect of cyber-interaction and bring a gender-conscious perspective that deviates from the bells-and-whistles boosterism that characterizes popular discussion of this largely male turf.

While Stone has disseminated her theories in scholarly publications like *Zone* and *Camera Obscura* and in her recently published book, *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age* (MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, 1995), she also is highly visible outside the ivory tower. She lectures widely, as many academics do, but Stone also spreads her ideas in a less conventional way—through performance art. In the last few months alone Stone has been invited to speak and perform what she calls her "stand up theory" at universities, museums, and symposia in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Austria, Australia, Canada, and New York City. This past year, she was so in demand that she would teach in Austin on Tuesday through Thursday, hop a plane Thursday night, do the gig, and fly back for Tuesday's class. "It was great," she says. "I stopped jet lagging. My body just couldn't remember where it was; I lived on whatever the local clock time was. It was wonderful, like being free in the world."

Freeing the body is a recurrent theme in Stone's writing and in her performance piece, *The Vampire's Kiss*. In the piece, Stone performs a monologue in her everyday attire (black jersey, black pants, black boots), accumulating bits of narrative that illuminate her themes of the body and technology. With considerable storytelling flair, she relates tales of phone sex, on-line gender switching, experiments in retraining physiological responses, the death of her father, and vampires.

"There was an experiment done in the fifties or sixties in which the subject wore inverting prisms that turned the world upside down," says Stone. "Within a fairly short period of time, he began seeing things rightside up; his brain had corrected his vision. After he removed the prisms, his brain had to readjust. This is wonderful, because it demonstrates how plastic we are, how plastic the neurological system is."

Stone takes this plasticity several steps further. "I propose a three-body model: the neurological body, the topological body, and, between the two, the translator body that acts like a switchboard." Stone tells of paralysed people who are retrained to feel erotic pleasure in another site on their bodies where they have feeling.

"What does it mean in our culture when you remap one of the forbidden zones into an area that is not forbidden?" she asks. It's more than a rhetorical question. In performance, she talks of having used this training to relocate her clitoris to her palm, then proceeds to demonstrate the possibilities of this talent by masturbating to orgasm by rubbing her palm. "The sensation is real, but I don't really have time on stage to come to climax...so I fake it. In Toronto, people threw cigarettes at the stage when I was done."

In conversation as in her work, Stone keeps coming back to the idea of "liquid identity," and her life certainly reflects it—in her commitment to exploring the places between worlds and the multiple facets of her own character, not to mention her own body. Technology has vastly expanded the potential for liquid identity. The cyborg vampire, Stone explains, sees mortals trapped not in time, but rather in a fixed subjective position. The cyborg vampire travels between the virtual and real worlds, between male and female. As Stone asserts, "Transgender is the mode of existence on the networks."

Putting it another way, she says, "There's a *New Yorker* cartoon of two dogs talking to each other and one of them says, 'On the Internet, no one knows you're a dog.' "

You can visit Sandy Stone at her World Wide Web site at http: www.actlab.utexas.edu ~ sandy.

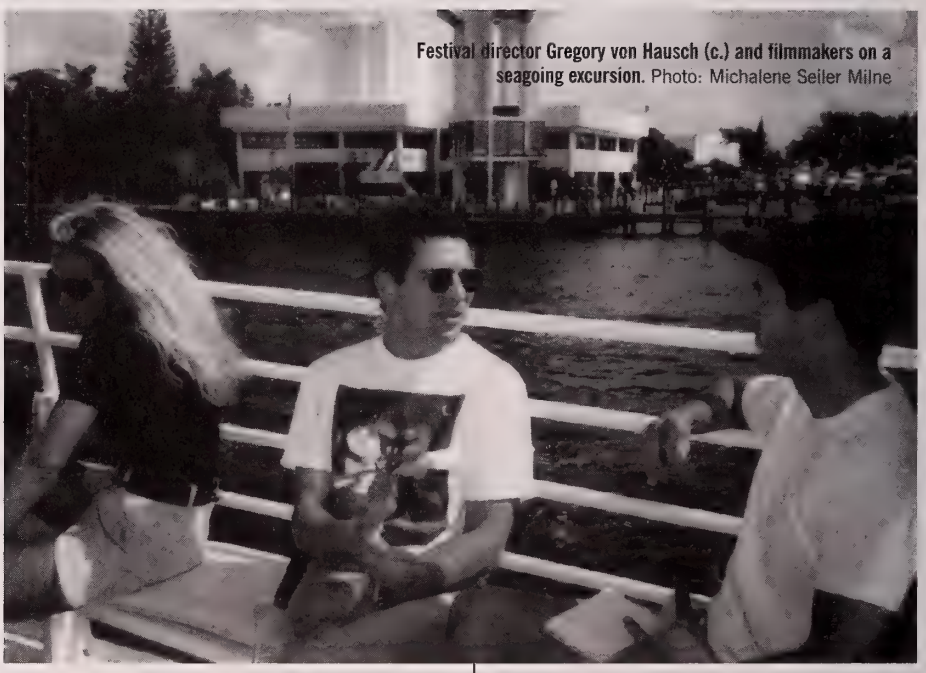
Nancy Bless is the gallery director at Women & Their Work in Austin, Texas.

Field Reports

Florida Flicks

The Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival

BY MICHALENE SEILER MILNE



Festival director Gregory von Hausch (c.) and filmmakers on a seagoing excursion. Photo: Michalene Seiler Milne

WHEN GREGORY VON HAUSCH TOOK OVER AS executive director of the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival in 1989, he made it his mission to help small independent productions find an appreciative audience in South Florida. Easier said than done. Laughing at the length of time it's taken to whet local appetites for arthouse fare, he explained, "If I had shown this year's lineup of independent films in 1989, no one would have understood what I was trying to do. I really have something in common with most filmmakers—we're all out there trying as hard as we can."

Von Hausch insists he has no template when selecting the festival's line-up, other than to pay special attention to first-time directors. He simply chooses what he likes and what he can get, which are not necessarily congruent in the competitive arena of festival planning. Regarding the hierarchy created by festivals that require premieres, he says, "I don't think it's conducive to the reason why we're all here supporting independent film: to get as many audiences for it as possible."

With 272 screenings over 19 days (Nov. 1 to 19), Fort Lauderdale is the longest competitive festival in the free world. More than 100 films were shown, including seven feature documentaries and 26 shorts packaged into 7 feature-length programs. American independents heavily dominated the 1995 slate, although there is never a predetermined geographical mix. In 1994, 10 Asian films were featured, while a previous year relied heavily on Scandinavian product.

When first hired, von Hausch admits, "I wanted to grow so quickly, really wanting to make the festival bigger, that I naively thought I could create a market here. At the time, MIFED was earlier, and people could stop on their way back from Europe." In 1991 an official market with 60 booths representing 30 countries was installed, but it was a painful financial failure, and the festival has only recently repaid the losses incurred. Von Hausch learned that the types of films submitted through the market were not of the artistic quality he endorsed anyway, and the best milieu for dealmaking is simply the informal atmosphere that currently prevails. The dozen or so distributors and buyers in attendance provided ample opportunity for relaxed interaction and included representatives from Prism, IRS Releasing, Seventh Art, Fine Line, Cabin Fever, Showtime, and the Australian theatrical distribution company Beyond.

True to von Hausch's commitment to first-timers, the festival screened a large number of debut films. Patrick O'Connor, who made the leap from writing to directing with *Sacred Hearts*, said he learned filmmaking by "reading books and taking classes to find out how everything worked. I surrounded myself with people I could trust and paid attention." The result was a Best First Feature award for his sensitive study of a teenage girl's family crisis. Produced by Brennen Dicker, the film was shot in only 13 days on a budget of $60,000. O'Connor financed his feature from the sale of *Zoo*, a script he developed during his fellowship at the Chesterfield Writer's Film Project. Steven Spielberg, who sponsors the Chesterfield Project with Universal Studios, bought *Zoo* in 1992. The festival also awarded a Special Jury Prize for Performance to Kelly Fritz, the film's young lead.

Richard Schenkman compared mounting his feature directorial debut, *The Pompatus of Love*, to "spending a year and a half pushing a rock up a hill with your head." Schenkman co-wrote the spec script with pals Jon Cryer and Adam Oliensis, who star in the film and co-produced it. Cryer, who currently stars in Fox TV's *Partners*, said they tried to get studio involvement for more than a year, but even with himself and Mia Sara (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *Legend*) attached, they had no luck. Producer D. J. Paul eventually raised first funds privately and the French production company Why Not Productions came in

for the last 25 percent of the $1.3-million budget.

Doug Tirola, who wrote, directed, and co-produced his first feature, *A Reason to Believe*, managed to find more than one innovative method of financing. The theme of the film—date rape on a midwestern campus—is, in Tirola's view, "political, [but] not really right nor left." So he scoured the back pages of every political magazine for companies that bought ad space, reasoning that the ads were there "only for support, not to really sell anything. Luckily, a number of them decided to invest in the film, but I don't know if that's because they really studied the screenplay or just that we were passionate about the theme." The plan was so successful that he and co-producers Ged Dickerson and Chris Trela raised the $177,000 needed for production.

To pay for postproduction, they approached Films Inc. and Swank, two nontheatrical distributors. When neither was interested, they decided to approach colleges directly, posing as "Pioneer Talent," representatives of nontheatrical releases. What they didn't mention was the fact that *A Reason to Believe* was the only film in their catalogue. Tirola explains, "They thought they were getting a first-run film, but were actually getting a rough cut." By offering to book the filmmakers (i.e., themselves) as speakers with the screenings, they boosted their income from $500 to $1,500 or $2,000 per night. Their contract included all meals and lodging, as well as college T-shirts to feed Tirola's souvenir collection. He, Dickerson, and Trela arranged a tour of 20 sites in 40 days ("It was like being in a band," he says) and finished with enough profit to cover their post budget.

For first-time director Julianna Lavin, whose *Live Nude Girls* opened the festival, financing was less of a problem. "I had planned to shoot in 16mm 'ultra guerrilla style' and fund it with credit cards, but I didn't have enough credit." Instead, Lavin found strong support from producer/friend Denise Di Novi, who responded enthusiastically to the script. Di Novi got the ball rolling when she passed the script along to her *Heathers* co-producers, who in turn sold the project to Republic Pictures.

Twilight Highway, a joint first-time writing/directing venture by Laurie Taylor-Williams and Merce Williams, made its premiere at the festival and also picked up a special Jury Prize for Most Original Screenplay. Robert Wuhl, a seasoned actor and writer, was on hand with his directing debut, *Open Season*, and earned himself the festival's first Renaissance Award for writing, starring, and directing. Other winning first-timers included *Joe and Joe*, David Wall's Outstanding Technical Accomplishment, shot on Cape Cod for only $35,000; David Kreiner's Israeli film, *There Was No War in '72*, recipient of a special jury prize; and Adam Isidore's Best Documentary, *Give a Damn Again*.

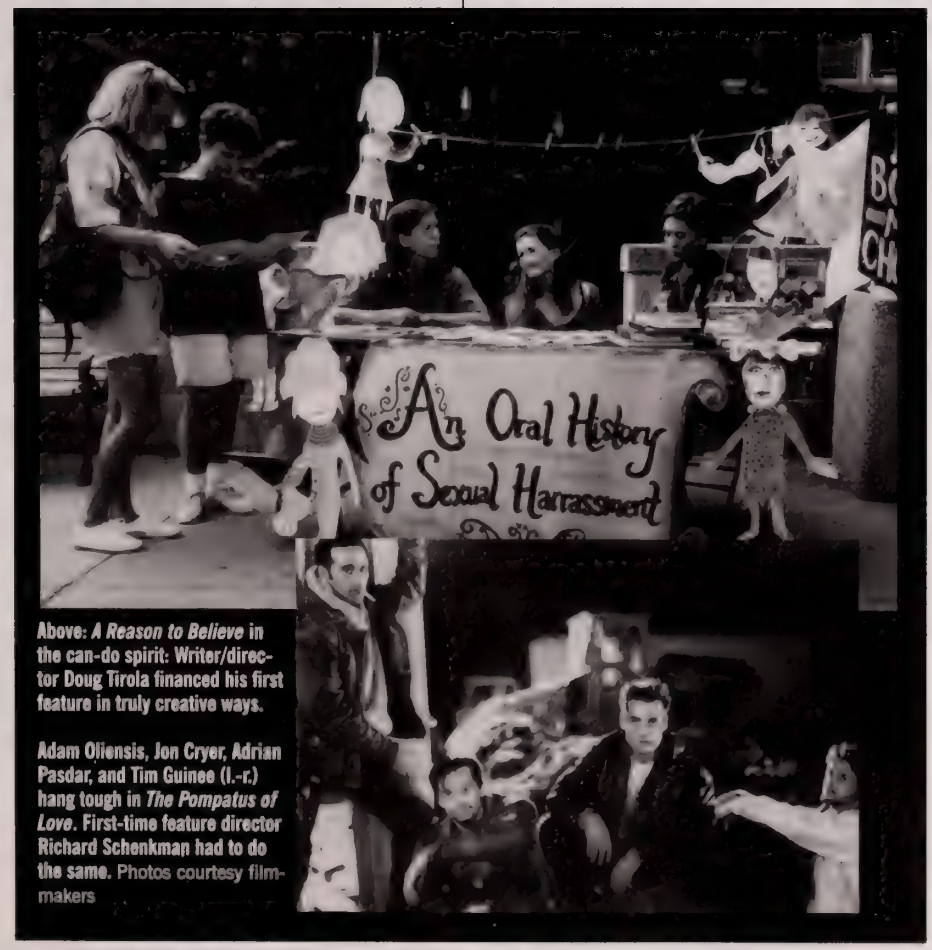
The top festival awards for Best Film and Best Director went to veteran John Schlesinger for his parody of D. H. Lawrence novels, *Cold Comfort Farm*. Best Actor went to Sean Astin for his role as Rory Cochrane's roommate in George Hickenlooper's *Low Life*, and Piper Laurie picked up Best Actress for *The Grass Harp*, directed by Charles Matthau. *The Monkey Kid* by debuting director Xiao Yen-Wang received the Best Foreign Film Award.

Although there is no pressure from the festival board or sponsors to attract big-budget films and stars, local audiences would naturally love to see more Hollywood names trooping to South Florida. Besides the recipients of 1995's Lifetime Achievement awards, Michael Caine and Robert Evans, other celebrities on hand included J. T. Walsh, Mia Farrow, Scott Glenn, Peter Riegert, Mia Sara, Dana Delaney, Julie Delpy, Phylicia Rashad, and Tim Reid.

Throughout the year, von Hausch explores diverse methods to find support for independents, including active encouragement of film production in Florida. The festival works closely with the local film commission and the Florida Entertainment Commission, a private corporation whose sole purpose is to bring more entertainment to the state. And since "local bankers only understand real estate," according to von Hausch, they've also made a special effort to provide educational seminars about film investment opportunities, bringing in speakers from New York and L. A. Each year during the festival, a series of free educational seminars sponsored by Eastman Kodak are available to all local filmmakers. This year's featured Robert Evans on producing, Lori Wyman on casting, and Shane Black on screenwriting.

Michael Caine, in his acceptance speech for the Lifetime Achievement award, paid due respect to the festival. "I think what you are doing with young unknown people is absolutely fabulous and obviously absolutely essential, because it is so hard to get ahead." It just might get a little easier with the kind of real support first-timers find in Fort Lauderdale.

Michalene Seiler Milne is currently producing Dog Bones and Events in Anvil City.



Above: *A Reason to Believe* in the can-do spirit: Writer/director Doug Tirola financed his first feature in truly creative ways.

Adam Oliensis, Jon Cryer, Adrian Pasdar, and Tim Guinee (l.-r.) hang tough in *The Pompatus of Love*. First-time feature director Richard Schenkman had to do the same. Photos courtesy filmmakers

Field Reports

Collective Insights

Four Groups That Have Withstood the Test of Time



The government demolished the English town of Byker after deeming it a "slum." An Amber collective member photographed the town residents house-by-house and then made the documentary *Byker* about its destruction. Courtesy Amber Films

BY DEBORAH REBER

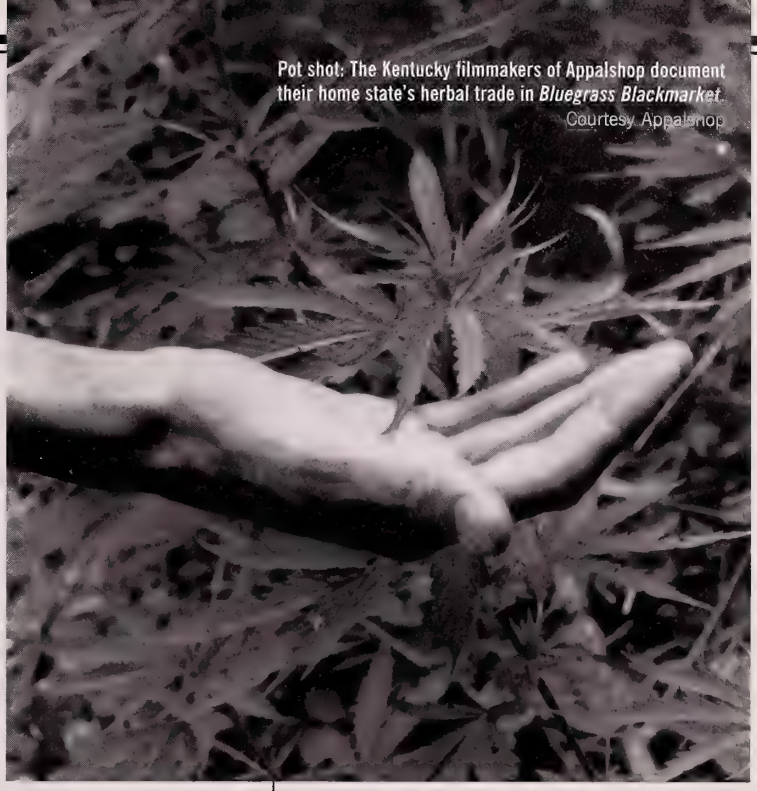
VIDEO AND FILM COLLECTIVES HAVE COME AND gone during the past quarter century with the frequency of fashion trends. A few have withstood the test of time, and four of these were highlighted at the Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival in New York City last October: Amber Films, from Newcastle, England (now 27 years old); Appalshop, from Whitesburg, Kentucky (26 years old); Ateliers Varan, from Paris (14 years old); and Sankofa Film and Video Collective, from London (12 years old).

Collectives can bring a great deal of good to the communities in which they work: they can generate dialogue about culture, identity, and society and many teach community members how to make their own films and videos exploring these issues. But because of their nonprofit structure and noncommercial goals, collectives often lead a tenuous existence. These four have beaten the odds just by continuing to work for so many years.

So how have Amber, Appalshop, Ateliers Varan, and Sankofa managed to stay together for so long, surviving Reaganism, Thatcherism, and recessions? The answers vary, but all come down to a simple tenet: they are solidly committed to the communities with which they work. What remains to be seen is whether this will be enough to get them through the rougher times ahead, as previously reliable sources of funding dry up.

THE TWO OLDEST, AMBER FILMS AND APPALshop, are classic examples of commitment in action. More than 25 years after their formation, their missions remain essentially the same—to create work that involves, educates, and engages their communities.

Amber Films was formed in 1968, when a group of progressive film and photography students in London pooled their resources. Their goal was to use their talents to empower the marginalized working class in the United Kingdom. "There has always been pressure for the working class to deny their roots and seek a life elsewhere," says Amber filmmaker Peter Roberts. "This is the main problem with the class system today. So in our work we attempt to prove that such a



Pot shot: The Kentucky filmmakers of Appalshop document their home state's herbal trade in *Bluegrass Blackmarket*.
Courtesy Appalshop

thing as society still exists."

In setting out to fulfill this goal, the members of Amber moved from London to Newcastle-upon-Tyne in northern England in 1969. Roberts calls the move a "defining act" for the group. An industrial city of about 500,000 people, Newcastle provided the perfect setting for Amber. Once they set up shop, they subsidized their work as a collective with outside projects, because of the poor economic climate for independent production in the early seventies.

Then in 1982, Amber's survival was ensured when the Association of Cinematography, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT) drafted the Workshop Declaration. This mandated the provision of funds for specified film and video collectives throughout the United Kingdom and forged an agreement with Channel 4 in London to support these workshops on a broad, operational basis, rather than project-by-project. "The Workshop Declaration allowed groups to experiment in a range of ways and allowed for formal exploration and even failure," says Roberts.

Through the eighties, Amber took advantage of this, experimenting with hybrid forms of documentary and fiction film, and sometimes incorporating still photography and animation into their work. They were also constantly devising creative ways to self-distribute and exhibit their projects and even began publishing their own books and leaflets. But despite their innovative efforts, Roberts isn't very optimistic about Amber's future. With an increasingly privatized broadcasting industry in the United Kingdom and Channel 4's Workshop funding all but a thing of the past, there is less money and fewer venues for their kind of work.

Roberts attributes Amber's endurance to their ability to integrate themselves completely into the Newcastle community over the years. Though they came in as "outsiders," today they have a very close relationship with the people. "The community is involved in the whole process," says Amber filmmaker Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen. "They've had previous positive experiences with us, so we'll have access to these communities again. There's never been a situation where we've had different visions, because the people are there all along."

Byker (1983), for instance, began as a photo project by one of the collective members who was living in the eponymous working-class town in Northeast England. She set about photographing portraits of the town's occupants, house by house. Then as the years rolled by and the central govenment decided to demolish the "slum," the project turned into a documentary about the dislocation of this community in order to make way for a "modern urbanization" project. During the 12 years of *Byker*'s production, Amber was given incredible access and worked closely with the community, giving the work a characteristic strength and depth. Similarly, *Seacoal* (1985), a hybrid fiction/documentary film that tells the story of the "seacoalers," or the people who collect coal waste washed ashore in the industrial town of Lynemouth, was made with the participation of its subjects. Again the production team lived with the seacoalers for more than two years while filming this project and cast them in most of the film's parts. This kind of close interaction with the subjects of their films ensures that Amber's depictions of the working class are a true reflection of the community.

APPALSHOP MEDIAMAKER MIMI PICKERING ALSO attributes the Kentucky media arts center's endurance to close community ties. "We all have a commitment and deep concern for the region," Pickering says. According to Appalshop filmmaker Herb E. Smith, "It's not just about making films. There's a war going on, and the camera has become part of the equipment for this war." The war Smith speaks of is the war on poverty—a key aspect in the formation of Appalshop.

In 1969, a group of Kentucky filmmakers created Appalshop in order to explore different aspects of life in the southern Appalachian mountains through video. They wanted to counter the negative stereotypes about the region that popular television shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies* perpetuated. They intended to give the community a chance to discover and communicate their own identities. "We're interested in a long-term relationship with the place we're a part of, and we want people to have a role in the dialogue about what kind of place they want this region to be," says Smith.

Today, Appalshop's focus has expanded from creating videos that explore questions of identity to those that address more complex community issues, such as land rights, drugs, and AIDS. One recent example of their social documentaries is *Bluegrass, Blackmarket* (1994), which looks at the illegal marijuana-growing industry in the Appalachian hills. Like many other Appalshop videos, this documentary uses no narration and allows the story to unfold through interviews with the people involved. Another recent work is *Belinda* (1992), in which a local woman with AIDS personalizes the tragedy of the disease, describing her pain at the thought of leaving her daughter behind. Through *Belinda*, Appalshop hopes to educate the mountain community about AIDS, as there are many misconceptions and negatives associated with the disease in the Appalachian region. "We are still trying to get *Belinda* out into the mainstream churches and other organizations, but sometimes it's hard even to give tapes away," admits Pickering.

As traditional funding sources for the arts are being rapidly depleted, Pickering expects Appalshop will have to reorganize, although the collective continues to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities,

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private foundations, and various state organizations, . "We're going to have to change in the future because of money problems," Pickering says. "Whether we downsize or upsize remains to be seen."

THE FUTURE OF ATELIERS VARAN IN PARIS IS IN jeopardy due to similar financial constraints. During its early years, the collective received a substantial part of its budget from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is no longer the case, and the collective now has to turn to other sources for funding, such as the Swedish Agency for International Development, the European Group of Film and Television Schools, Channel 4, and other television stations. As a result of declining resources, the collective has been forced to substantially cut down on their innovative activities.

A considerable percentage of Ateliers Varan's production costs go towards travel and equipment. The filmmakers and anthropologists who founded Ateliers Varan in 1981 wanted to bring the power of film and video to people living in areas where media production tools wouldn't normally be accessible. So in addition to their training school in France, Varan has held production workshops in more than 14 countries in the developing world. Since 1981, Varan has gone to South Africa, Bolivia, Mozambique, Portugal, Kenya, Mexico, Brazil, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Romania, among others. Varan filmmaker Perle Mohl feels strongly that "people should be able to film in their own society," a perspective that is the driving force behind their international workshops.

In these three-step workshops, Varan first teaches Hi8 video and 16mm film production, then covers more in-depth production issues, such as funding and distribution. At the end of the workshops, they leave the video equipment behind, sparking the creation of local media centers that continue to produce videos and train new mediamakers in the region.

Their most recent workshop was in 1993 in South Africa, where they wanted to provide a forum for the black majority to speak out about society, as well as play a role in improving it. The workshop resulted in the feature-length documentary *My Vote Is My Secret* (1994), a video that captures the hopes and triumphs of black South Africans during the country's first democratic elections. "We want to give people ways to stage their own life," says Mohl. "In our method, the filmmakers and the camera people are actors and partici-

(top) An African woman living in London with her children in cramped and dreary surroundings tries to keep beauty alive in Sankofa's *Home Away from Home*. Courtesy Women Make Movies

A Les Ateliers workshop resulted in *My Vote Is My Secret*, by South Africa's Direct Cinema Workshop. Courtesy JBA Production



pants in the action. Life takes an analytical dimension in the filming process."

Although nearly 20 film professionals and cultural anthropologists make up the Varan team, only two full-time employees can be supported at any given time. Monthly meetings allow the group to stay informed on projects and plan future workshops. Despite the success of these workshops—all have resulted not only in documentaries, but have managed to create media production centers that have taken root and survived—only four workshops have been held outside Paris since 1985, mostly because of their high cost and the lack of available monies. Nonetheless, Mohl expects Ateliers Varan to continue, if only on a modest level, due to its flexible structure and rotating staff.



THE SANKOFA FILM AND VIDEO COLLECTIVE similarly can't even afford to maintain a full-time staff. Formed by Martina Attille, Maureen Blackwood, Robert Crusz, Isaac Julien, and Nadine Marsh-Edwards in 1983, the London-based collective was formed to explore cultural representations of black identity in the Western world through film and video. In one of Sankofa's most recent films, *Home Away from Home* (1994), filmmaker Maureen Blackwood depicts the plight of an African woman living in London as she attempts to keep her cultural heritage alive in her family. In *In Between* (1992), filmmaker Robert Crusz uses both documentary and dramatic reconstructions to explore his personal struggle as a Sri Lankan searching for his cultural identity.

Because of their innovative approaches to self-representation, Sankofa has gained international recognition for their work on issues ranging from AIDS to politics to migration. They maintain a high profile through touring exhibitions and participating in lecture circuits. But while Sankofa continues to receive support from Channel 4, the British Film Institute, British Screen, and Sony (UK), Blackwood doesn't believe their reputation guarantees them a secure future.

Blackwood accredits Sankofa's survival to their ability to streamline operations. "The people here have a lot of tenacity and courage and a firm belief in what we're trying to do. We try to organize ourselves in a way that helps us to survive," she says. Today, as Channel 4 increasingly shifts its focus to film projects in the developing world, according to NYU's Africana Studies professor Steve Gregory, many collectives in the United Kingdom have recently dissolved. "We haven't received funding for a number of years now," says Blackwood. "A lot of organizations who gave us money in the early eighties are no longer supporting us. It makes it difficult. Nobody here is getting paid a full-time wage, so we'll invite people who have worked with us in the past to work on certain projects. We have more of an open door policy."

In these days of privatization and declining funds, these and other collectives face a tough battle to stay alive. Despite their common missions to create socially relevant media that explores identity, culture, and society, they face the prospect of becoming increasingly downsized and marginalized. Their challenge is to remain a necessary part of today's broader social movements and cultural politics. With luck, they'll continue to beat the odds.

Deborah Reber is an independent videomaker who most recently worked with UNICEF as a producer/communications consultant.

FIELD REPORTS

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From their Cambridge, Mass., apartment, Valèrie Lalonde and Richard Leacock talk about their recent collaborations and his marathon career. Photo: Kurt Winokur



Leacock's Life Lessons

Richard Leacock and coproducer Valérie Lalonde talk about their new videos and his 60 years of documentary production.

Richard Leacock is one of the creators of the documentary film movement that we now call cinema verité. Born in London in 1921, he was raised in the Canary Islands, where he made his first film, Canary Bananas, *at the age of 14. After graduating from Harvard University and serving as an Army cameraman in WWII, he worked with Robert Flaherty on* Louisiana Story. *He then went on to make or work on most of the defining direct cinema documentaries of the fifties and sixties. He taught film at MIT from 1968 until he retired in the eighties, when he moved to France and started making video documentaries with Valérie Lalonde.*

This conversation took place in November 1995 in an apartment that Leacock and Lalonde keep in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They were in town so Leacock could receive the Boston Film/Video Foundation's 1995 Vision Award. On March 31, he will appear at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on the occasion of Virgil Thomson's centenary to present and discuss excerpts from Louisiana Story, *which Thomson scored.*

IND: Let's start with the present. What are you and Valérie doing now?

RL: When I left MIT, tired, and went to Paris, my idea was to make a film in a medium where I could feel free to shoot when I wanted to shoot. I said, "What happens if we go out with an instrument that you can actually use, without saying 'one dollar, two dollars, three dollars' when you run the camera?" In a sense, I was saying, "Let's do a film about nothing in particular." At this point I met Valérie, and she started showing me her France. And we just carried these little tiny cameras for two years.

IND: You started with 8mm cameras?

RL: Video 8.

VL: Not Hi8. It didn't exist then.

RL: The one I loved best was the one that had no zoom. It had three focusing positions: mountains, people, heads.

VL: That's what I learned on.

RL: I still think it was a wonderful camera. A great deal of our first film [*Les oeufs à la coque de Richard Leacock* (*The soft-boiled eggs of Richard Leacock*)] was shot on it. Absolutely simple, trivial to carry. We ended up with a hundred hours. I recently came across a list of subjects that I thought would be in the film. Not one of them was.

BY GEORGE FIFIELD

VL: Apart from the eggs.

RL: Except the eggs. Editing it was, I was going to say it was a nightmare; it wasn't a nightmare. A nightmare always ends when you meet the impossible.

VL: We edited all the sequences.

RL: Yeah, we just made sequences. They had nothing to do with each other. Somehow there is an internal logic in it. But it was hell's own blight to find that.

VL: When he [started editing] I went away, because I realized he was doing a love story, so I felt sad. I went to my mother's and I said I wouldn't come back until he'd got twenty minutes thrown together. I came back a week later, and he had an hour and a half. [We] more or less stuck to that.

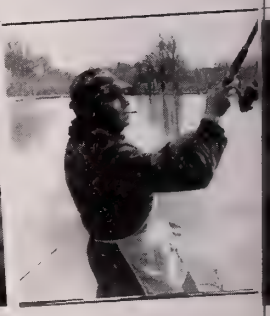
IND: *Les oeufs* starts with a funeral.

RL: Yes, the funeral of Henri Langlois [founder of the Cinémathèque Française].

IND: I thought that was your way of saying "the death of film."

RL: That's right. Because [documentary maker] Jean Rouch said in the film, when they were demolishing the Palais du Festival in Cannes, "It is the end of cinema." He really feels that; he calls video "the AIDS of cinema." So Valérie's voice says in the film, "Cinema is dead, long live video!"



The point is that we could do what we wanted. At first, we went directly to Beta-SP; now we go directly to Beta digital, and edit digital to digital. The quality is absolutely astounding! Nobody but some technical who-hah counting pixels can tell the difference.

We've proved our point. We've been on every major network in Europe: French national TV (La Tois); Arte [the Franco-German arts show]; Channel Four in England; NDR in Germany; Austrian television. You name it. We've had no problems. However, if a young person goes to a TV station and says, "I want to do a film on video 8," they'll treat you like dirt. This used to be true in 16mm. In the sixties everybody sneered at 16mm.

IND: Valérie, you started shooting on *Rehearsal: The Killings of Cariola?*

VL: I started shooting a bit on *Les oeufs à la coque*. I never shot before I met Ricky. I didn't agree with all this heavy equipment, I didn't see the point. On [*Rehearsal*], I was backstage with the actresses a lot of time, actually working with them, rather than shooting. Then I started shooting because that girl Jane was so beautiful, with her blonde hair. In fact, I got the key scene. So that's when I became indispensable to him. He had to accept me.

RL: From there on, I just get jealous of her. Because she hasn't been through all these ritual trainings, Valérie is less hung up on some very weird old traditions as to how you shoot something.

VL: I learned by looking at him shoot. The way he moves when he shoots. And looking at all the rushes, since we were sharing our lives.

RL: I think we have another thing in common. It's not really a seduction, but the fitting in with the people you're filming. You have to be very very cautious about shooting too much, because all of a sudden it becomes the major thing that's going on. You want to be very selective, making it clear you [can] put the camera down, put it away. You want them to have you around even if you are not shooting. It's a very complex thing. There are no rules for it.

IND: What are you shooting now?

RL: Heaven knows whether this will work; I'm scared stiff as usual. I wrote letters to my late wife from the Army all the way through World War II. There are five hundred typed pages of letters. I was a combat cameraman from 1942 to '45, mostly in Burma and China. We were shooting 35mm—handheld spring-wound camera, one roll of film: one minute. Longest shot was fifteen seconds before you had to rewind, maybe longer.

I want to make a book of the text and with it a videodisc that gives you the feeling of being there. Not another bloody war film—bang, bang, bang, symphonic music, here we are entering the gates, liberating this, that, and the other thing. No, I want to show what it was like. This on Friday, this on Saturday. We've just started. We've found six rolls, six minutes.

IND: That you shot?

RL: Yeah, with my slate on it.

VL: I shot him finding it.

RL: And it's absolutely astounding: A Burmese man being executed by O.S.S., setting fire to a village, that sort of thing. Very steadily shot. [Laughter] No sound, of course. We have no idea how these things will go together, but I think they will.

IND: But you have the letters, the original footage, the footage that you're shooting now and...

RL: And my memories.

IND: How did you end up in the film unit as a cameraman—from Harvard into the United States Army?

RL: I'd been a professional cameraman already when I was at Harvard. [But] I had majored in Physics. We knew about the atom bomb. [My professor] had outlined what Uranium 235 could do. [He] calculated that a cubic meter of this stuff would blow the whole of New England off the face of the earth.

I wanted to go fight the Nazis and didn't want to go to some bloody research institute, [so] I kept very quiet about the physics stuff. I said I was a cameraman, and by absolute miraculous fluke, I was assigned to the Signal Corps photo center and trained as a combat cameraman. No complaints.

IND: After the war, you met up with Robert Flaherty, whom you'd met before, and he asked you to come with him to Louisiana to shoot *Louisiana Story*.

RL: Yeah. Our families had been sort of intermixed. My sister had ghost-written a book with Mrs. Flaherty, and he had seen *Canary Bananas* [Leacock's first film]. And he liked me. I was strong, healthy, and that was enough. He really needed an assistant. It grew into being a full cameraman and a very, very respectful relationship.

It wasn't easy to shoot the way Flaherty shot. It was contrary



Soft-boiled eggs and other images from Leacock and Lelonde's first video, *Les oeufs à la coque de Richard Leacock*. All photos courtesy videomakers

to everything you'd learned anywhere. He was a precursor to everything we're doing now. He would shoot everything he thought was beautiful or interested him or attracted him, even if it wasn't in the script.

IND: He'd get sidetracked?

RL: Yes, for days. It was very expensive. That's why he couldn't work with a crew, ever. It was just him, myself, Mrs. Flaherty, occasionally an assistant to help carry things. And we followed his nose around; it was extraordinary. Then when I went back to working with regular directors who knew exactly what they wanted, it was very difficult.

IND: You have said about working with Flaherty that "the uncertainty was infectious."

RL: Oh, yes. You were looking for miracles. I am an enormous admirer of Flaherty, obviously. I think he invented the sequence.

We went to a colloquium in Marseilles of early ethnographic films, and they were shots, shots, shots, just shots, mostly people with dark skins. Then boom, out of no place: *Nanook of the North*. The building the igloo, the way it involves the entire family—it's absolutely galvanizing. Still today, it has an extraordinary effect on the audience. Then we saw shots, shots, shots from all these other expeditions, and then we saw *Moana* [directed by Flaherty] from 1926. Again, a series of sequences, absolutely immaculate beautiful sequences, each telling their little story.

Now this doesn't mean that there aren't problems in Flaherty's films. There was only one thing he could do, which was get into [commercial movie houses]. There wasn't any other forum for looking at movies at that time, and he had to compete with Hollywood, which was very very difficult. Where is the love story? Where is the crime? So he got sponsored by outside people. *Nanook* was sponsored by Revillion Fur, a fur company in France. *Moana* was paid for by Paramount, so they still have their claws on it.

IND: *Louisiana Story* was paid for by Standard Oil.

RL: It was a very oily film. The films are full of problems because of what I call the audience pleasers. Every one of them has a tug of war in it: Nanook and the seal, J. C. in *Louisiana Story* with the alligator. These are dumb sequences. They are audience pleasers. They are not the miraculous parts. He knew that.

The miraculous parts of Flaherty for me are where he makes sequences of very simple processes, that are a revelation. In *Louisiana Story*, the mystery of the appearance of the rig. It's a huge rig. You never, in whole film, see a long shot of the rig. It was just a perfectly ordinary rig, but the way it is dealt with visually makes it the tallest rig in the world.

We first did the whole drilling sequence in the daytime. We were running out of time, money, everything, [but] Flaherty said we were going to reshoot it at night. I said you're crazy, but I went to Woolworth's and bought some clip-on lights and lit up the rig and climbed all over the whole bloody thing. We did it at night, and it went like greased lighting. It was right. It isolated the action from the background. He was a man afflicted with getting it right. But it was very difficult.

We shot magnificent footage of an oil refinery. According to the contract with Standard Oil, that had to be in the film. We shot all this wonderful stuff. Everything we loved about the oil refinery [couldn't be shown, because it] turned out to be illegal: flames, smoke, flickering lights, and things.

IND: All the visual things.

RL: There is nothing more glorious visually than pollution. Smoking factory chimneys used to mean progress. That's a problem. There is nothing more boring, probably, than a well ordered society.

IND: The next film that you regard as important in your career is *Jazz Dance*.

RL: That was a wild liberation. That crazy man, [director] Roger Tilton, asked me to shoot *Jazz Dance*. Everybody had told him, since it had to be synched sound, that you must use these enormous cameras. We didn't. We used the handheld, same as combat shooting. First I got off the tripod. With Flaherty everything was on a tripod. And I had learned during the war that I don't like tripods.

VL: They are never in the right place.

RL: Yes, even a small one. It's wrong. In *Jazz Dance* we just went wild shooting. And they managed to edit everything so it looks

like it is in synch.

IND: You once said about *Bernstein in Israel* that the interesting thing about that film was what you didn't get.

RL: Yes. I was sent by *Omnibus*, the TV program. Lenny and I were great friends. We had done a couple of plays and an opera at Harvard when he was [Serge] Kousevitsky's assistant [at the Boston Symphony Orchestra]. He used to play at the film society at Harvard. When we needed someone to play the piano, Lenny would do it for ten dollars a night.

A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THAT *HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY* IS A SORT OF MEAN FILM. I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE TEACH THAT. IRONY IS A BETTER WORD. IT'S AN IRONIC FILM.

IND: For the silents.

RL: *Battleship Potemkin* with music by Leonard Bernstein. He was very good at it; he liked it.

He was going to conduct the dedicatory concert to a new auditorium in Tel Aviv. It was a great big concert hall. I took a gamble: I had never used 16mm sound before. I took a 16mm sound Oricon, which was a big camera with optical sound recorded on the edge. We knew that would be pretty lousy sound, so we took along one of the early Ampex portable tape-recorders. It weighed about 30 pounds in a suitcase, and it was nonsynch. This is 1958—relatively new. We took a sound man and got a crew in Israel. We had a wonderful crew. And we missed everything!



Scenes from *Le Trou dans la Mer* (L & Ctr.) & *Les oeufs à la coque de Richard Leacock* (R).
Courtesy videomakers

By which I mean, we were setting up the camera in the concert hall, and there were all these carpenters hammering and chiseling and making an unbelievable racket. And Lenny, rehearsing the orchestra, just lost his temper. He splattered all over the ceiling, screaming and yelling. And we still had about three more plugs to plug in. So we missed it. You can't go up and say, "Lenny, do you mind doing that over again?"

One night, Lenny and Felicia, in the hotel room on a little piano, performed almost the whole of *West Side Story* for their friends. Where was the camera? It was in a truck parked in a garage someplace.

So I realized that that became my goal. You had to film, not a concert—that's relatively easy—but a rehearsal, with perfect sound and mobile camera with no strings attached. You can't lift a connecting cable over the first violin who is in the middle of the music. That really defined what it was we needed. I was already working with [Robert] Drew trying to define it.

IND: There were technical obstacles to hand-held synch sound that at this point began to be solved. You joined up with and made a series of documentaries with Robert Drew. The first was *Primary*, about the 1959 Wisconsin Presidential primary. Who followed Kennedy and who followed Humphrey? Or were you all following everybody?

RL: This is very contentious. Drew says that we were hired to do what we were told, more or less. Actually, Drew and I had the only synch rig, an Auricon with a cable attaching us to a tape recorder, which Drew carried. The others were shooting wild, but we had a system that had been developed for Drew by a Hollywood sound man, where we could adjust sound and post-synchronize it without changing the pitch. It was a quite fancy rig. [D. A.] Pennebaker was mostly in charge of that.

IND: That was an editing device, not something you carried with you while shooting.

RL: Yes. The shooting was by Pennebaker, [Albert] Maysles, Terry MacCartney-Filgate, and me. In general, I followed Kennedy, but not always. A lot of the synch sound was Drew and me. The last scene in Kennedy's hotel suite, I was just alone. I simply parked a tape recorder behind Kennedy's chair and left it on.

IND: It was connected by cable to you?

RL: No, I had synchronous sound. [Leacock leaves the room and returns with his Auricon camera] A hundred foot wind. It takes four and a half minutes, and it takes optical sound.

IND: [Reading] Sixteen Millimeter Sound on Film Auricon

RL: That's what we started with. Oh god, it's heavy. And the sound is pretty bad. But we had the tape deck also. At least the Auricon told us where the sound was.

IND: That scene in Kennedy's hotel suite became one of the defining direct cinema moments. The other one that I think of in *Primary* is the long walking shot following Kennedy through the crowd at the Milwaukee meeting hall.

RL: Pennebaker had bought a 5.7mm wide angle lens, which was very wide angle for those days. A bug eye lens. He and Al cooked that up. So Al shot that shot. I am actually in it, if you look with a magnifying glass at the top of the frame as he walks through the

hall. Al was having huge fun with that.

That caused more bad shooting than any other shot in history. Everybody started walking about with bug-eye lenses on. It's like, you know, the Steadicam has created a plethora of bad shooting. The importance of *Primary* still hasn't been understood. The fact that there are no interviews is staggering in a film of that sort. There are no people talking to cameras. It's unbelievable. That still hasn't been understood by the industry or television at all.

IND: After working for three years with Robert Drew, you started Leacock Pennebaker, Inc., with D. A. Pennebaker. For your first film, you made *Happy Mother's Day* with Joyce Chopra, about the media circus surrounding the birth of quintuplets in South Dakota.

RL: Drew broke off with Time Life, which had financed the whole venture. We had three glorious years where they had put up a lot of money. It was an extraordinary experiment. But they weren't getting anyplace, apparently. So Drew went with the only network that was interested in what he was doing, which was ABC. And Penney and I, rightly or wrongly, didn't want to be part of a network news service, because it was getting more and more departmentalized. You're a cameraman, you're an editor, you're a reporter. And I simply don't believe in departmentalization of filmmaking.

IND: You're a filmmaker.

RL: That's what I believe. So Pennebaker and I split off. We were in desperation; we had no money, no nothing. I was asked by a friend of mine who was editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* to make a film of the event that they had just bought the right to exploit, the quintuplets. Joyce Chopra and I went down. But it didn't get shown. That film was rejected by the sponsors, Curtis Publications. The editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* loved it, but his boss didn't.

IND: Then Curtis Publications gave your footage to ABC and they recut it?

RL: They took all the footage. It was their footage. They recut it.

VL: Have you seen the official version [*The Fischer Quintuplets*]? It is so kitsch.

Continued on p. 60

Filmography

The following is an annotated list of the films mentioned in this article, and by no means represents a complete list of Richard Leacock's films.

1935 *Canary Bananas* 15 min., 16mm. Filmed on his father's plantation.

1946 *Louisiana Story* 80 min., 35mm. Directed by Robert Flaherty

1954 *Jazz Dance* 20 min., 35mm. Directed by Roger Tilton, photographed by Richard Leacock and Robert Campbell. All hand held. A celebration of be-bop, filmed in one night in a dance hall.

1954 *Toby in the Tall Corn* 30 min., 35mm. Written, directed, photographed, and edited by Leacock. Leacock's first television film. A visit to a traveling tent theater show in Missouri; with Russell Lynes, for the *Omnibus* TV series.

1958 *Bernstein in Israel* 30 min., 16mm. A close look at the young Leonard Bernstein on a conducting tour.

1960-63 Joined Robert Drew Associates. Worked on a series of major documentaries including:

1960 *Primary* 60 min., 16mm. Produced by Robert Drew. The race between John F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey in the Wisconsin primary. Leacock is alone with Kennedy and his staff in the hotel suite when the election results come in.

Other Robert Drew films that Leacock worked on include *The Chair* (1960), *Yanki No!* (1960), *The Children Were Watching* (1960), *On the Pole (Eddie Sachs)* (1961), and *Crisis: Behind a Presidential Commitment* (1962).

1963–68 Formed Leacock Pennebaker, Inc., which was responsible for many of the best documentaries of the era, including *Don't Look Back* (1966) and *Monterey Pop* (1968).

1963 *Happy Mother's Day* 30 min., 16mm. With Joyce Chopra. A report on the birth of quintuplets to Mr. and Mrs. Fischer of Aberdeen, South Dakota. During the filming Leacock and Chopra became aware of the media and commercial exploitation of the quintuplets and made that the focus of the film. The film's sponsor then used the original footage to produce an "official" version titled *The Fischer Quintuplets*.

In 1968 started teaching at MIT. Continued to make various films including *Community of Praise* (1981) for the acclaimed *Middletown* series, and *Lulu in Berlin* (1984). Retired from MIT and settled in Paris. Met and started working with Valérie Lelonde, entirely in video.

1991 *Les oeufs à la coque de Richard Leacock* 60 min., Video-8. Directed by Richard Leacock and Valérie Lalonde. This lovely video is a perfectly balanced series of short vignettes about the French people. Their love of music, food, fishing and gossip are all punctuated by the ritual of opening and eating the soft boiled egg, *l'oeuf à la coque*. It was sponsored by Andre Boutang for the French television program *Oceaniques* and has aired on French TV (FR-3), La Sept (cable), and on German TV (NDR)

1992 REHEARSAL: *The Killings of Cariola* 30 min., Hi8. Directed by Richard Leacock and Valérie Lalonde. This documents rehearsals for a performance of *The Duchess of Malfi* by the Chareb Company in London.

1993 *Gott Sei Dank* 30 min., Mixed film and video. In the late eighties, Leacock visits his friend Helga Feddersen shortly before her death. Later, he made this documentary mixing it with excerpts from a film they made together of Paul Burkhard, composer of "Oh! Mein Papa!" It aired on NDR (German television) in 1994.

THE CAMPAIGN GAME

SOME POLITICANS PLAY THE CAMPAIGN GAME ON TV. SOME PLAY IT ON THE STREETS, BLOCK BY BLOCK, HANDSHAKE BY HANDSHAKE.

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

BUT WHICHEVER NEW OR TRIED-AND-TRUE WAY CANDIDATES CHASE VOTES, IT'S SURE TO BE FOUND IN VOTE FOR ME: POLITICS IN AMERICA

A THREE-PART SERIES ABOUT THE CULTURE OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. THREE STALWART INDEPENDENTS—LOUIS ALVAREZ, ANDREW KOLKER, AND PAUL STEKLER—ARE BEHIND THIS SERIES, WHICH WILL CAP OFF PBS'S ELECTION-YEAR PROGRAMMING NEXT FALL.

FRANK SHEINKOPF FANCIES HIMSELF A FORCE FOR GOOD. This political consultant, who has masterminded countless attack ads for Southern Democrats and is now preparing President Clinton's spots, proudly calls himself "the Avenger." "I'm serious. These are bad people," he says of the Republican opposition.

Sheinkopf is on the phone, pummelling one client with advice while another, an Alabama judge sheathed in a black robe, stands off to the side, nervously running through his lines for a TV spot. Sheinkopf, a consummate New Yorker, is intense and insistent as he leans into the phone receiver: "You have to be prepared to kick the shit out of this guy and leave him dead on the street."

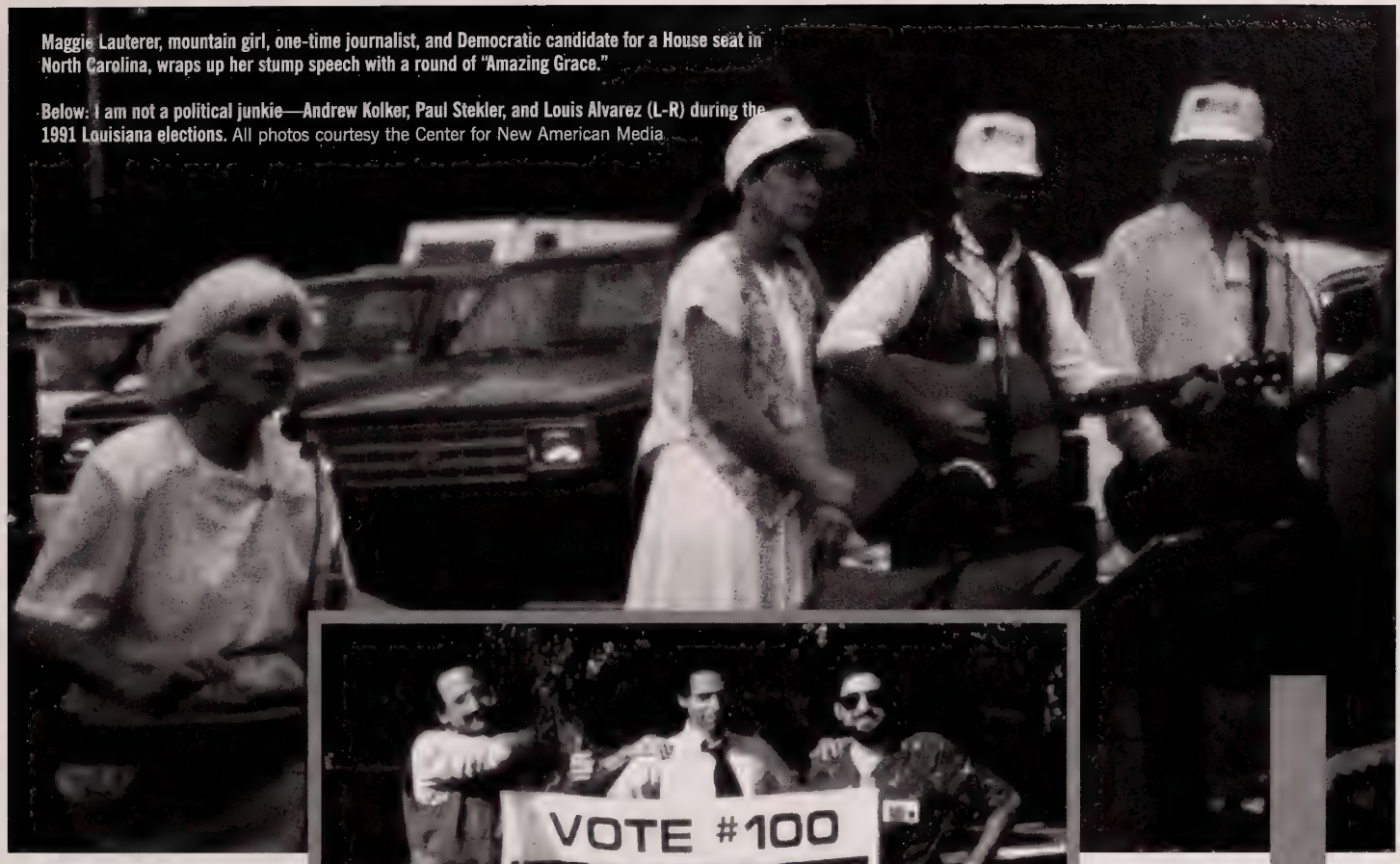
Later, he and his producer examine a newspaper photo of an opponent they're using in an attack ad. "That looks like a mug shot," he says approvingly. "What can we do to make it look worse?"

THIS IS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR A TELEVISION CAMPAIGN—that combination of political advertising, photo op, and sound bite. It's a type of campaign we all know by heart, and it seems everyone's doing it. But the TV campaign is not the only road to political office.

"For most campaigns in the U.S., television isn't the way that people win," says Paul Stekler, a political scientist and coproducer of *Vote for Me: Politics in America*, a three-part series for PBS currently in postproduction. "The vast majority of offices are fairly low level," he explains. "So what we tend to think of as TV-dominated campaigns are really restricted to the Senate, gubernatorial, and some House seats, maybe some mayoral races. 'Retail,' grassroots campaigning is more important than the media gives credit for. Our series covers both."

The series, *Politics in America*, gives an inside view of "what political culture is and what candidates go through," according to Stekler, who is coproducing it with Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker. It has taken the trio to more than 30 states, where they've interviewed or shot campaign footage of dozens of politicians, often in the heat of battle, including Mario Cuomo, Pete Wilson and Kathleen Brown, Ann Richards and George Bush, Jr., Barney Frank, Alan Simpson, Bob Dole, Phil Gramm, Pat Buchanan, and Newt Gingrich.

But don't expect a "Road to the White House '96." In fact, most of the faces in this series will be unfamiliar, belonging to local politicians and political hopefuls, and most of the races date from 1994. Like the trio's earlier collaboration, *Louisiana Boys—Raised on Politics* (1992)—a chronicle of Louisiana's 1987 and 1991 gubernatorial races and a look back at 50 years of governors in that state, which also captures the carnivalesque and at times corrupt character of Louisiana politics—the new series will examine politics from a cultural, anthropological perspective. And it will do so with a good dose of irreverent humor,



Maggie Lauterer, mountain girl, one-time journalist, and Democratic candidate for a House seat in North Carolina, wraps up her stump speech with a round of "Amazing Grace."

Below: I am not a political junkie—Andrew Kolker, Paul Stekler, and Louis Alvarez (L-R) during the 1991 Louisiana elections. All photos courtesy the Center for New American Media

which will no doubt result in something that's a far cry from your typical PBS documentary on politics.

And yet, *Politics in America* has been warmly embraced by the folks at public television, from the top guns to the station programmers. Not only has the series managed to get substantial financial support from PBS and CPB; what's more, it was called the "centerpiece" of PBS's campaign '96 coverage by top PBS executive Erwin Duggan.

Scheduled for broadcast in October, the series is part of PBS's year-long "The Democracy Project," which subsumes more than 100 hours of programming, including profiles of the challengers and final contenders, specials hosted by conservative commentators Ben Wattenberg and William F. Buckley, and an *American Experience* on the explosive 1968 Democratic Convention.

Politics in America's inclusion within the Democracy Project makes Alvarez, Stekler, and Kolker mighty proud—and slightly stunned. They're still shaking their heads over the fact that they—three died-in-the-wool independents—have not only cracked PBS, but stumbled onto center stage, with trumpets blaring.

IT'S NIGHTTIME IN THE PROJECTS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO, where the thermometer has dipped to 10 degrees. Two black men in their thirties armed with a stack of posters huddle near a utility pole. They're engaged in a Chicago specialty: political sign wars. It's a game of attrition, with each camp trying to tear down or cover up the posters their opponents put up during the day. These two crusaders think they've found the key to victory for alderman challenger Tyrone Kenner: "They'd need a twelve-foot ladder and a six-foot person with a two-foot arm-reach to get this down," one confidently explains, before moving on to plaster over incumbent Dorothy "the Hat" Tillman's posters with their own.

THIS IS ANOTHER KIND OF CAMPAIGN, THE BLOCK-BY-BLOCK, door-by-door quest for votes—the "retail" campaign—that relies on volunteers rather than airtime and entails the kind of pavement pounding and flesh pressing that might seem a thing of the past, but in fact is alive and well all across the country.

In Chicago, both the remnants of the old Democratic Machine and the new ethnic coalitions engage in this street-

level campaigning. On the South Side, aldermen display their posters on pushcart-style garbage cans, so everyone knows whom to thank for garbage pick-up. In the Spanish-speaking Pilsen district, a Mexican-American alderman meets with constituents who complain about their deteriorating sidewalks—which he doggedly traverses as he hunts for votes. In Chicago's Northwest Side, a veteran volunteer for Irish alderman Brian Dougherty tramps from one identical brick house to the next, approaching those showing shamrock decorations with added confidence. Meanwhile, Dougherty is busy trying to retain his seat by keeping his constituents happy. It's not always easy.

"There was somebody claiming there was a crow attacking their kids," recalls Stekler. "So the alderman called and said, 'Okay, I want a description of this crow, 'cause we don't want to get the wrong crow.' " He laughs, then adds, "They talk about how they're half social workers, because they've gotta deal with every crazy request. It's not only garbage cans."

A good portion of one hour of *Politics in America* will be devoted to Chicago and the campaigns of four alderman—a Mexican American, African American, Irish American, and Puerto Rican. "In Chicago, aldermen are elected by only 2,000 or 3,000 votes, but the reason we're covering that stuff," explains Stekler, is because "those small things lead to an understanding of urban politics, ethnic politics."



Urban politics is one of several "archetypes" examined in the series, says Stekler, as are southern politics and negative campaigns. *Politics in America*'s other broad themes include the experience of Washington outsiders running for office; the "eternal campaign" that incumbents face; and the impact of lobbyists, the media, and new technology on the electoral process.

One of the questions they ask is, Does the increasing presence of "minority" candidates—ethnic politicians, religious fundamentalists, women, gays and lesbians—change the system, or does the system change them? It's what the producers call "the assimilationist paradox."

"The way the American system is set up, it promotes compromise. It does not promote extremes," says Alvarez . "We have two big parties. Since they're big, they tend to encompass a range of opinions, as opposed to European-style politics," with its multiple, finely subdivided parties.

"One of the stories we're trying to cover is, What happens if you approach politics as a game of moral absolutes, when politics is essentially a game of compromise?

"Every group does that," he continues. "Especially groups that are newly part of the process...It doesn't have to do with ideology; it has to do with, 'Are you selling out our community by buying into the way the system works?' It's an eternal dilemma."

IT'S 1980 IN PLAQUEMINES PARISH, AN ISOLATED AREA ON THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF LOUISIANA, with one road leading in and out, and far more water than land. But this remote corner of the South has a greater concentration of oil reserves than any other part of the country.

That's not all that makes it unique. This year it's holding its first free election in 50 years. For half a century, the patriarch of the wealthiest family enjoyed near dictatorial control over the parish. But when the oil baron retired and tried to pass the torch to his two sons, their bitter feud ultimately shattered the family's power base. And so the Blacks, Creoles, Italian Americans, Yugoslavians, and smattering of Filipinos who lived and toiled in Plaquemines Parish finally were able to participate in an unrigged election.

Every day for five months, Alvarez and Kolker drove from New Orleans to the parish to make their first major video as partners. "The whole thing about 'politics is local'—that's what *Ends of the Earth* is about; all politics is *really* local," says Alvarez. "There's a scene I just love, where they're saying, 'Find out about the old Becnel store; there are five votes over there. That could be really important.' "In many ways, what we're doing now [with *Politics in America*], there are definite echoes," he reflects. Attention to small, low-level races, for one, and the sense that not all voters are blasé. "The Blacks and mixed races had candidates for the first time," Alvarez continues. "You could really see how this election made a difference in people's lives."

ALVAREZ AND KOLKER MET IN 1975 AT THE NEW ORLEANS VIDEO ACCESS CENTER (NOVAC), a media center that was then run as a collective. Both were transplants from the North. Kolker, fresh from Clark University in Wooster, Massachusetts, "went down for Mardi Gras and stayed for 10 years." Alvarez, after graduating from the University of Wisconsin, signed up as a Vista volunteer, our domestic Peace Corps, and was sent to New Orleans to make TV for low income communities. At NOVAC, he and Kolker produced programming about gentrification, health care for the poor, and perceptions of urban crime. After five years at NOVAC, the two split off (tired of having a collective "looking over their shoulder," Alvarez explains) and entered a partnership that has lasted over 15 years.

"In those days, we were feeling, 'What could we contribute? Why should we make films?'" recalls Alvarez. "We thought, 'Look at your own backyard and at places that have not been overexposed in the media.' And we were very fiercely Louisiana-centric. It's an amazing place and there's a story sprawling out of every window, and it hasn't been done to death. We felt we could really make a difference, be honest to Louisiana, and also get our message out to a larger audience."

Alvarez and Kolker went on to make a number of documentaries in Louisiana and later in New York (where they moved in 1985) that can all be seen as a form of cultural anthropology. Their two most popular are *Yeah You Rite!* (1985), about New Orleans language and accents, and *American Tongues* (1987), a national version of the same concept. "*Yeah You Rite!* was the earliest example of the 'Andy and Louie' style," says Alvarez: "A lot of humor, a lot of depending on real people, and trying to discuss a subject that is fairly fresh in the world of TV." (Booming sales of these tapes, which the partners self-distribute along with their other videos, has allowed them to keep their SoHo office running.)

Before hooking up with Paul Stekler to make *Louisiana Boys*, neither Alvarez nor Kolker had much direct experience with politics beyond their work on *Ends of the Earth*. In 1968, the 16-year-old Kolker campaigned for Eugene McCarthy in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where things were "totally run by the Democratic machine. What they did was blatantly illegal," he recalls with a laugh, with voters from cemetery rolls, bosses pamphleting inside the polling place, and husbands and wives sharing the same voting booth. "I was attacked on election day for reporting irregularities," he says. The whole experience "probably made me somewhat cynical."

Alvarez's first brush with electoral politics was not any more wholesome. When at NOVAC, he wanted to shift from being a Vista volunteer to earning a government-supported salary through the CETA program. "We knew someone at City Hall," he recalls, "but the quid pro quo was, we had to campaign for his candidate for one afternoon, stuffing mailboxes."

Which he did, and in the process got his first taste of New Orleans-style politics. "It was basically a political pay-off," he admits good-humoredly.

Both Alvarez and Kolker consider themselves generalists. "I'm not a political junkie," says Kolker. "I'm not like Paul; I don't take the *Almanac of Politics in America* home with me."

If Alvarez and Kolker provide *Politics in America* with the irreverent, light touch, it's Stekler who ensures its political acuity. Charactersitally, his is the editing suite that displays dozens of old campaign buttons and posters. Trained as a political scientist at Harvard, Stekler headed to New Orleans to teach at Tulane. He was put in touch with Alvarez and Kolker in 1982 when he had an idea for a film about Black politics in the New South, but didn't know the first thing about producing.

"I called them up and said, 'Hi, I'm Paul Stekler. I've been thinking about making a film. I heard you guys know how. Can you tell me?' And they said, 'Sure! Come on over.' "

Stekler learned the ropes and produced his first project, *Hands That Picked Cotton*, then a second, *Among Brothers*, about the 1985 election for mayor in New Orleans. Then Stekler, Alvarez, and Kolker hooked up for *Louisiana Boys* (edited and coproduced by Anne Craig), but wound up postproducing it long distance. Stekler had moved to Boston to become a producer on the *Eyes on the Prize* civil rights series, and Alvarez and Kolker had made the move to New York City.

Aired on *P.O.V.* in 1992, *Louisiana Boys* put the trio on the map, especially among politicians. "One of the weird things about showing *Louisiana Boys* on *P.O.V.* was it got an incredible mount of attention in Washington," Stekler recalls. "Even the people who didn't see it had heard about it, like [Clinton strategist] James Carville." Subsequently, politicians being courted by the producers to appear in *Politics in America* would stop to watch the cassette, "even in the white heat of the campaign," Alvarez says. "They're junkies. They can't *not* watch."

THERE ARE CANDIDATES WHO RUN AS "OUTSIDERS," even though their resumes and Rolodexes prove them otherwise. Then there are those who don't have to pretend.

A mountain girl from North Carolina who became a popular television journalist—a local Charles Kurault—Maggie Lauterer decided to run for Congress in part to prove that a regular citizen could run against and defeat a wealthy two-term incumbent.

"I don't want to run by formula," she says to her family on their side porch, in view of the rolling foothills. "Isn't that the super sell-out, if you become someone else in order to win?"

Lauterer, a personable, earnest woman with a gentle twang and shoulder-length silver hair, tries to run a clean campaign. She ends her plain-talking stump speech by plaintively singing "Amazing Grace" while accompanying herself on the dulcimer. She believes she's in touch with the people and listens hard when she shakes their hands, even while a handler is trying to hurry her along.

Lauterer is smart enough to hire professionals—a seasoned campaign manager, a pollster, a media consultant. She's savvy enough to attend an Emily's List training session in Washington D.C. She spends hours on the phone making cold calls, asking strangers for $2,000 contributions. She's a trooper, she's honest, she's a known entity, she's a true Washington outsider.

And she gets creamed.

LAUTERER'S SAGA WILL DOMINATE ANOTHER OF THE HOUR-LONG PROGRAMS in *Politics in America*. It's a complicated story that delves into the tension between a politically green candidate and a winnable campaign. It also looks at the decline in the South of the "yellow dog Democrats" ("people who would just as soon vote for a *yella dawg* as vote for a Republican," Kolker drawls) and probes into

"We're trying not to do cookie-cutter programming, like those series with ten hours on sharks or great criminals," says Alvarez. "We're trying to maintain the dense, layered texture of our one-hour shows."

why people run for office in the first place. And, in its portrait of this folk-singing former journalist, it offers an image of the kind of candidate that you don't often find on C-SPAN.

This outside-the-Beltway perspective is one reason why *Politics in America* has been so warmly embraced by public television. "The grassroots stations like it because it's showing *them*," Alvarez says, recalling the reaction they received after showing a 10-minute sample reel at the annual PBS programmers' convention last June in Chicago. "They can promote this—the folks in Philadelphia, the folks in Minneapolis, and so on—because



we're shooting in their states."

Better than promises of carriage, the system gave them money—substantial amounts and early on. This experience was a first for Alvarez, Kolker, and Stekler, none of whom had previously been success ful obtaining funds from PBS or CPB.

"So imagine our surprise when we walked in there with our little six-page treatment that we'd basically made up, and they both said, 'It's great! It's just what we want to do,' " says Alvarez.

Luck was on their side. The year was 1993, and PBS was still smarting from the meltdown of its "Voters' Channel," an ambitious Presidential election-year project with the John and Mary Markle Foundation based on a commissioned study by veteran public television producer Al Perlmutter. Markle ended up withdrawing its $5 million, fed up with PBS's unwillingness to commit more than $3 million and with internal divisions between the system and stations that undercut their ability to proceed. In the end, Markle's money went to CNN.

When, shortly after this, the threesome presented the idea of *Politics in America* to PBS and CPB, "We were at the right place at the right time. They liked our work," says Alvarez. "So, they were willing to give us at least an R&D grant and see what we came up with." That $50,000 grant resulted in an 120-page treatment, which in turn paved the way for their biggest check yet: a $700,000 Challenge grant from PBS and CPB.

Mary Jane McKinven, Director of News and Public Affairs Programming at PBS, says, "This is a team who really loves this subject," she says. "They're both irreverent and deeply affectionate about the world of politics. They don't just make fun of it." As proof, she cites *Louisiana Boys*, which she and others at PBS saw several years earlier. "*Louisiana Boys* hit a target right away," she says. "We were so happy when it won a DuPont Columbia Journalism award" in 1993. Based on *Louisiana Boys* and the clips seen so far, McKinven and others in the news division are very enthusiastic about *Politics in America*. "It gets behind the scenes and shows what makes politics tick," she says. "And it conveys it in a way that conventional news coverage doesn't, which is neutral and solemn."

After getting a Challenge Grant, additional moneys started flowing: $400,000 from the Ford Foundation; $650,000 from the CIT Group, a New Jersey-based financial services company; and $250,000 from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. With total costs projected at $2.3-million, the producers are in sight of their goal.

With public telvision's financial backing in hand, the producers next needed to find a presenting station—one that helps with promotion, fundraising in some cases, and numerous other details necessary to prep a show for air. After researching the possibilities and looking especially hard at which stations have a track-record raising money for comparable series, they honed in on WETA, the Washington, D.C., station known for its political programming. The station was receptive. "When [WETA president and CEO] Sharon Rockefeller came up to talk to us," Stekler recalls, "she understood exactly what we were doing." WETA quickly became partners in the production.

Like McKinven, David McGowan, WETA's senior vice president for news, public affairs and program production, was a fan of *Louisiana Boys*, which he'd seen on *P.O.V.* while an editor at *Time* magazine. Their approach to politics, he says, "is not that unusual in print—something that's well written and with humor—but you don't often see it on TV." As he's watched bits and pieces of the series in the making, McGowan has been pleased with how "it goes outside the Senate and Presidential politics. It shows how politics infuses every level of life."

Editorially, the relationship with WETA is one the filmmakers are quite happy with. And no wonder; to date, the station has

essentially maintained a hands-off approach.

The producers are not surprised. "We were the ones who originated the series, we were the ones who got PBS interested in it, we were the ones who won all the awards for *Louisiana Boys*, which this is in the spirit of," Alvarez says. "And everyone realizes that, including WETA. I'm not saying we're like Ken Burns, but essentially, it's the independent nature of what we're doing that was the whole appeal to begin with."

McGowan agrees. "It's a kind of film made with a lot of personality—and it's not my personality, it's *their* personality." From where he sits, their relationship is like that of editor and writer, and "the draft is still being written."

With a Labor Day due-date, there's enough time for the producers to carve out a colorful, quirky, and carefully crafted work. "We're trying not to do cookie-cutter programming, like those series with ten hours on sharks or great criminals," says Alvarez. "We're trying to maintain the dense, layered texture of our one-hour shows."

Ultimately, the fact that Alvarez, Kolker, and Stekler have had such success getting public television's support comes down to more than just good timing. Alvarez points to several other factors: First, there's their substantial body of work, the result of two decades as mediamakers. "The first ten years were in Louisiana," he notes, "so we were not just another filmmaker from New York. It separates you from the pack."

Second was their success with *American Tongues*, the first show on the first season of *P.O.V.* "It got amazingly big numbers—three times as high as usual. And it got good reviews and was *accessible*," Alvarez emphasizes, which brings him to this third point.

"All three of us pride ourselves on making accessible films." This has helped with their video rentals, and it most certainly was one of the characteristics that attracted PBS.

Fourth, the producers have worked actively on establishing relationships with individuals within the public television system over the years. By the time they approached PBS and CPB about *Politics in America*, key people knew not only their previous videos, but the producers personally. A CPB program (now defunct) that brought in independent producers to the annual PBS meetings helped them enormously. "We got to mix and mingle," says Alvarez, who attended in 1991 and with Stekler in 1993. "It was a good way to come face-to-face with programmers and understand their side of the equation." He adds, "My advice to independents is to make these [kinds of] contacts and stay in touch."

Finally, they had a good proposal with a fresh idea. "No one had made a film about political culture," says Alvarez. What's more, their 120-page proposal laid out the premise of the series, its thematic strands, and a production plan in convincing detail. "We've pretty much stuck to it," says Stekler with obvious satisfaction.

BUDDY CIANSI, FIVE-TERM MAYOR OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, never stops running for reelection. But it's a task this mayor—a chubby, glad-handing, back-slapping kinda guy—seems to live for. As one newspaper reporter puts it, "Buddy Ciansi would attend the opening of an envelope."

Ciansi made a full comeback after a personal scandal put him out of office for one term (he allegedly abducted and beat up his ex-wife's boyfriend with a fireplace log). We see him now in his glory, striding down the street, shaking hand after hand with a robust "how're ya?" He dances with giggling geriatric ladies, brags to strangers about his 30 pound weight-loss, kisses Petunia the pig, and troubleshoots along the way.

"I want my tree and sidewalk replaced," a man implores.



"Okay, take care of that: tree and sidewalk," Ciansi commands, and a young aide with a clipboard steps forward, while the mayor briskly moves on.

"You're not registered?" the mayor asks a teenage girl. Before she can do more than shake her head, he snaps his finger and another aide steps up.

But he also has his down moments, which, more often than not, occur in full public view. A woman asks about his fiancée; he solemnly explains that she's getting married to another man that very day in Barbados, a situation he bemoans later with an acquaintance dressed in an Uncle Sam costume—a bizarre detail that's somehow apt.

"He was quite the frenetic campaigner," recalls Stekler. "He completely forgot he had a mike on, and we hear, among other things, him discussing his personal life, which was so sad we could not prevent ourselves from including it. Actually it's relevant, because he's talking about what it is like to lead a life that's as public as it is private, and what that does to your private life."

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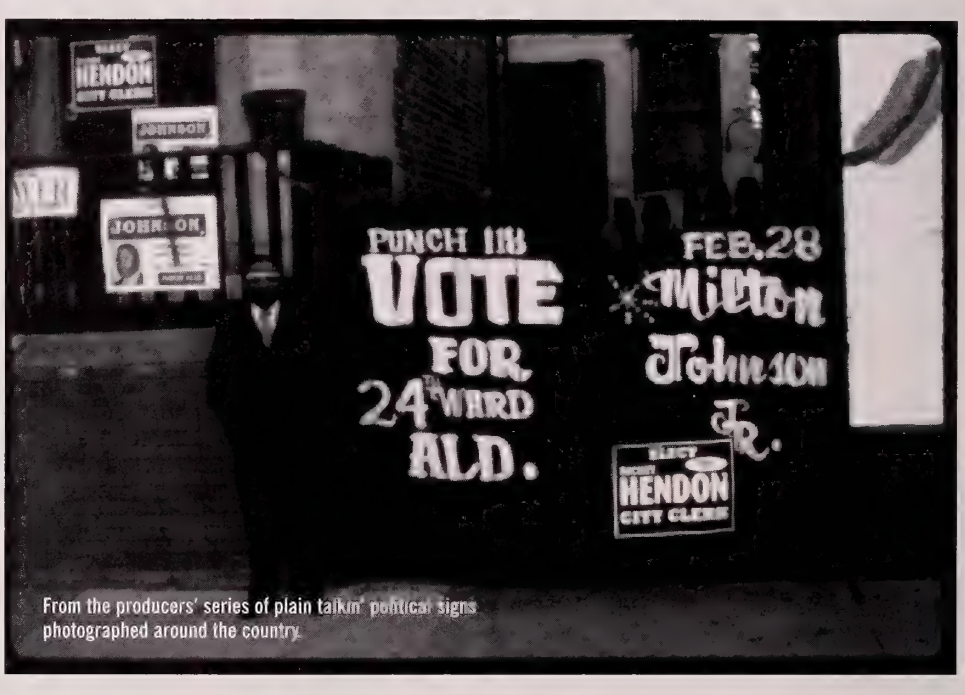
"We called tons of people," Stekler says. "The phone bills were outrageous." Small wonder, since, unlike campaign films from *Primary* (1960) to *The War Room* (1993) they were crisscrossing the entire country following dozens of campaigns.

Two sources were particularly helpful. One was Charles Cook, publisher of the *Cook Political Report*, a monthly newsletter that profiles and rates every national and gubernatorial race. Cook came up with Maggie Lauterer, who turned into a major strand. Another key source was Michael Barone, a senior writer for *U.S. News and World Report* and author of the *Almanac of American Politics*. The producers accompanied Barone ("the *ultimate* political junkie," according to Alvarez) when he visited one of the five (out of 435) congressional districts that he hadn't see before. "He drives around and says, 'There's a Presbyterian church; there must be Germans in the area.' He's got this encyclopedic knowledge and is able to make all these connections," Alvarez gushes.

In the end, there was never a lack of great subjects. The problem was wanting to be everywhere at once, and the limited time they could spend with each candidate—between one day and three weeks. "That's the most frustrating part of it," says Alvarez. "It goes against the way we work." By now, however, he and the others have learned to deal with their constraints.

"We can't cover everything. For a while you think you can, when you're young and cocky," he laughs, now 40 and a newish father. "You have to just say 'enough,' choose your stories, and calm down."

Has working on this series affected how the producers think about the electoral



From the producers' series of plain talkin' political signs photographed around the country.


Lobbyists try to find a cell in "The Well", the only room in the phones are operative.

process?

"[When] you look at how the system actually works, you can both be amazed that people misunderstand how it works and appalled by other things they don't even know about," Kolker chuckles. He leans back in his editing chair and muses, "This project has actually opened some dimly lit eye I had somewhere. It's a lot larger and a lot more complex than I had imagined—the process of electing people, why people get involved, and how it all boils down in different parts of the country."

In the end, he and his partners are reassuringly sanguine about the campaign process today.

"Our view," says Stekler, "is look at grassroots politics. People are out there for good reasons—wanting to accomplish something, to serve, be liked, make a difference."

"We want to increase participation of the disenfranchised in the system," says Alvarez. "We're showing folks from all walks of life involved in the system, and having a helluva good time." He pauses, then confesses, "What we saw, it takes the edge off your cynicism."

Independent *editor Patricia Thomson previously covered documentaries on the campaigns of Bill Clinton* (The War Room) *and Oliver North* (Semper Fi, *now titled* A Perfect Candidate).



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In&Out of Production

BY ADAM KNEE

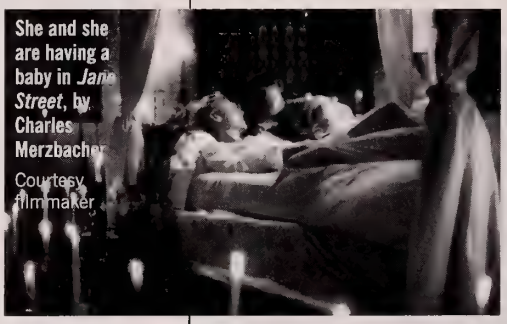


An unhappy camper: From *Opposite Camps* directed by Ben Brand and produced by Jonathan Mednick.
Courtesy filmmakers.

WHEN FILMMAKERS BENJAMIN BRAND AND Jonathan Mednick embarked upon shooting a promotional film about a rural Connecticut retreat for Harlem children, they soon discovered that the communications struggles between the campers and their white college-age counselors were far more compelling than the expected images of inner-city kids enjoying the country. With the permission of the camp, campers, and counselors, Brand and Mednick went on to shoot a documentary about the conflicts at this facility arising from age, race, and class differences and resultant cultural misunderstandings. Shot on a three-chip Hi-8 camcorder with a minimal crew, **Opposite Camps** (16mm & video, 52 min.) captures a significant struggle for cultural autonomy against a summer backdrop of campfires, swimming, and arts and crafts. The documentary was completed with a $31,500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. *Opposite Camps*, Other Pictures Film & Video Prod., 245 E. 11th St., #1C, NY, NY 10003; tel/fax: (212) 614-8959.

A documentary coming from another camp altogether is Michelle Handelman's **BloodSisters** (3/4" video, 77 min.), which offers an insider's view of the complexity and variety of the San Francisco leather dyke subculture. *BloodSisters* mixes experimental and traditional documentary techniques to portray the lives of eight diverse members of the S/M lesbian community, as well as to chronicle important subcultural events and to offer discussions of such topics as role playing, butch/femme politics, and the limits of consensuality. The film, which will be having its San Francisco theatrical premiere on March 21 at the Roxie Cinema to coincide with National Women's Month, also features images of S/M ritual and play and soundtrack music by a number of local girl punk bands. *BloodSisters*, M+M Productions, Box 170415, San Francisco, CA 94117; tel. & fax. (510) 245-1709.

Media work may not be all fun and games, but the notion of interactive play on a global scale is certainly brought to the fore in artist Shu Lea Cheang's multimedia installation **Bowling Alley**, which was presented at Minneapolis's Walker Art Center November 1995 to February 1996. For the installation, Cheang transforms a gallery into an oversized bowling lane with a perpetually rolling bowling ball that encounters a video monitor, rather than pins. On the monitor, images of falling bowling pins are transmitted from a popular local bowling-spot-cum-performance-space, and, in turn, the sound of falling pins activates moving laser disc images created by a group of local artists—with whom Cheang has collaborated via e-mail. As Cheang explains the project, "The bowling lane is a concept for an old communal space where locals meet face to face for a night out. Stretching the concept, I am trying to construct a new form of community in cyberspace." *Bowling Alley*, Shu Lea Cheang, 225 Lafayette St. #812, New York, NY 10012; tel/fax: (212) 777-6912.



She and she are having a baby in *Jane Street*, by Charles Merzbacher.
Courtesy filmmaker.

The evolution of fundamental cultural conventions is likewise a focus of **Jane Street** (16mm, 100 min.), a new independently financed feature by Charles Merzbacher. Shot on location in Manhattan, *Jane Street* is a comedic look at the unusual living and leasing situation of a straight man and his two lesbian roommates, who are planning to have a baby. Merzbacher, a former NYU film teacher, here uses the diversity of New York as a context for exploring expanded notions of community and family. *Jane Street*, Altar Rock Films, 155 E 29th St., ste. 21A, New York, NY 10016; (212) 684-3886, fax 679-1522.

The Los Angeles art world is the backdrop for the new narrative work **Ultimate Sacrifice** (video, 24 min.), written and directed by Jack Reilly, a Professor of Video/Film at California State University, Northridge. Shot entirely on location in artists' studios, galleries, and public sites, the video evokes the high pressure climate of the contemporary art scene through the story of an art star trying to evade an assassination conspiracy against him. *Ultimate Sacrifice*, Floating Image Productions, 710 Wilshire Blvd., ste. 405, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 313-6935.

Inhospitable working environments are also the subject of **Out At Work: Lesbians and Gay Men on the Job** (video, 60 min.), now being completed by Hunter College faculty members Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson. The film explores the stories of four gays in the workplace who were harassed and discriminated against because of their sexual orientation: employees fired by a "family restaurant" that considered them unsuitable, a harassed auto worker whose union ultimately passed a constitutional clause to protect gays, and a library worker and a female electrician who both won union victories related to gender discrimination. Through these personal narratives, the film examines concrete strategies to gain workplace rights, and it is thus intended as a kind of "civil rights training." Gold and Anderson were awarded a $19,470 grant from the American Film Institute's Independent Film and Videomaker Program for completion of the documentary. *Out At Work*, Kelly Anderson,

120 E. 4th St. #3E, New York, NY 10003; (212) 982-7222.

Experimental media artist Albert Nigrin's **Mental Radio** (video, 11 min.) "depicts psychic and telepathic interactions between soul mates both animal and human," while also visually interpreting his experience of a thyroid illness. The film, originally shot in super 8, uses editing techniques to suggest certain physiological sensations stemming from the disease, a movement between instability and tranquility. Ultimately, the work, as Nigrin describes it, "juxtaposes the vitality and fragility of the human body with that of the earth/nature." The piece was a winner at the 1995 American Film Institute National Video Festival in Hollywood. *Mental Radio*, Light Pharmacy Films, 55 Louis Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (908) 249-9623. Also available from Canyon Cinema, (415) 626-2255.

From the "It's Never Too Late to Start" department: Florida writer/producer/director Francis Patrick Theriault, a 62-year-old fifth grade teacher, first began work in film production in 1990. He has since then self-financed a number of video shorts and a 16mm feature through his own production company. The film, entitled **Bound** (87 min.), was shot over the course of 12 days and concerns intrigue and kidnapping in a film production office, of all places. It won the award for Best Florida Made Feature at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival. *Bound*, Pennywise Productions, 1151 S.W. 109th Lane, Davie, FL 33324; (305) 472-8776.

Other works in and out of production:

• Massachusetts filmmaker Hilary Weisman (Firefly Films, 617/244-1718) is completing work on a 16mm short entitled **Fresnel's Ether Drag**. The film, which concerns the relationship between a high school senior and a private investigator, was funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

• **Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs and Empire** is a recently completed documentary about U.S. foreign policy in the Philippines. The 30-minute video is available for purchase from the producer, the American Social History Project (212/966-4248).

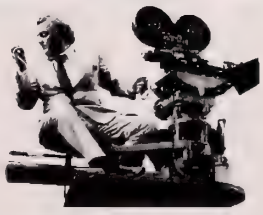
• An Orange County "slice of life" is offered up in **Walking Between the Raindrops**, a 75-minute video feature debut by Evan Jacobs (Anhedenia Films, 714/839-6805). This Southern California romance features soundtrack music by a number of local bands.

• Robert Jones has recently completed filming on the feature **Hollywood Capri** (Wildcat Productions, 407/767-0478). Shot on location in Los Angeles and Orlando, the film is a comedy about a film professor whose wife threatens to leave him for a rock & roll band.

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BY KATHRYN BOWSER

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JAN. 1 FOR MARCH ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED.

DOMESTIC

ACCESS AWARDS, July 5-7, CA. 2nd annual edition of fest accepts cable access works in the following cats: children's program, educational/doc, election coverage, entertainment, environmental, health-related, local origination, minority issues, news coverage, political debate, religious, senior issues, sports coverage, student project, women's issues & controversial subject. Winners receive gold-plated award; finalists & honorable mentions get certificates. Montage nonlinear software awarded to one access facility by random drawing. Awards are for access facilities & people who are or have been submitting mat'ls to such. Entries may have originated on film or video but must be submitted on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: March 21 (late deadline March 28; add $5). Festival of Independent Producers & Access Awards ceremony held in San Diego. Contact: Access Awards, c/o Ron Hebert, competition coordinator, 9525 Mission Gorge Rd., #78, Santee, CA 92071; (800) 411-4331.

ADAM BARAN HONOLULU GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, June 9-15, HI. Doc, fiction, animation & experimental prods about lesbians, gays, transgenders & bisexuals accepted; all genres & lengths. Fest operates under auspices of LIFE Foundation & the AIDS Foundation of Oahu & donates net proceeds to them. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on 1/2" only. Deadline: May 1. Contact: Adam Baran, Honolulu Gay & Lesbian Film Fest, 1877 Kalakaua Ave., Honolulu, HI 96815; (808) 941-0424; fax: (808) 943-1724.

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, August 14-18, Chicago, IL. 3rd annual competitive fest, organized to encourage low-budget film/videomakers & provide venue for underground, ind. & experimental works; incl. works outside entertainment mainstream, controversial, cutting edge, transgressive, politically incorrect & beyond. Both first-time directors & pros welcome. Entries must be produced for $1K or less per minute "in the can" budget. Prizes: best feature, short, experimental, doc. Entry fee: $25 shorts under 60 min.; $35 features. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, super VHS, VHS, Beta, 3/4", Hi8, Pixelvision, interactive. Preview on 1/2" only. Deadline: April 15. Chicago Underground Film Fest, 2501 N. Lincoln Ave., #278, Chicago, IL 60614; (312) 866-8660; fax: 489-3468; clark@interaccess.com.

INTERCOM INDUSTRIAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, August, IL. Oldest int'l industrial film & video fest in US; now in 31st yr. Industrial, sponsored & educational prods eligible. Aim is "to showcase enormous technical & creative energy behind sponsored prods & to highlight importance of media arts in business communications." Cats incl. dental science, doc, drug abuse, educational, environment/ecology, fashion/music video, fundraising, human relations, medicine, personal counseling, public relations, public service & information, religion, research, safety, sales/marketing, sports/recreation, training, travel/transportation & video news release. Special achievement awards to acting, cinematography/videography, computer graphics/animation, directing, editing, graphics, humor, music, special effects & writing. Awards incl. Gold & Silver Hugos to top prods in each cat. Gold & Silver Plaques may also be awarded in each competitive cat. Entries must be produced betw Apr 1 of the preceding year & date of entry. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $100-$120. Deadline: late Apr. Contact: Fest Director, Intercom Industrial Film and Video Festival, Cinema/Chicago, 415 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 644-3400; fax: (312) 644-0784.

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, July, CA. Established in 1980, noncompetitive fest (under annual theme Independent Filmmakers: Looking at Ourselves) showcases new ind. American Jewish-subject cinema & diverse selection of foreign films. Fest presents dramatic, doc, experimental & animated shorts & features about Jewish history, culture & identity. Filmmakers need not be Jewish; films selected by subject. Special programs vary from yr to yr & have incl Russian, Sephardic & Latino programs. 30-35 films showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Late March. Contact: Janis Plotkin, director, or Caroline Libresco, associate director, Jewish Film Festival, 2600 Tenth Street, #102, Berkeley, CA 94710; (510) 548-0556; fax: (510) 548-0536; Jewishfilm@aol.com.

JEWISH VIDEO COMPETITION, June, CA. Now in 3rd yr., competition accepts entries from every level & cat of prod. Entries must have originated on video or computer only, been submitted on VHS-NTSC, been produced w/in preceding 3 1/2 yrs & be up to 100 min. Awards: Jurors Choice (share $750); Jurors Citation (share $500), Directors Choice (share $250); Honorable Mention (certificate & screenings); Lindheim Award for program that best explores political & social relationships between Jews & other ethnicities & religions. All winners screened at special awards presentation at the Magnes Museum for 2 mos & other venues to be announced. Formats: 1/2"; exhibition on 3/4", Betacam. Entry fee: $25 under 30 min., $35 over 31 min. Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Bill Chayes, video competition coordinator, Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94705; (510) 549-6952; fax: (510) 849-3673; wchayes@aol.com.

MARIN COUNTY NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, July 3-7, CA. Competitive fest accepts 16mm film under 30 min. Up to $1000 awarded in cats of student, ind. & animated. Films screened during Marin County Fair. Format: 16mm; preview on VHS only. Entry fee: $15. Deadline: March 22. Contact: Marin County Fair & Exposition, Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael, CA 94903; (415) 499-6400.

MINNESOTA FILM AND VIDEO EXPO, June 14-16, MN. Competitive fest seeks "innovative & entertaining independent prods." Film forums & seminars follow selected prods. All genres accepted. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, video. Entry fee: $10; free to AIVF & IFP members. Deadline: Apr. 19. Contact: Robert Blair, Minnesota Film & Video Expo, WHAM Enterprises, Inc., 1769 Reaney Ave., St. Paul, MN 55106; (612) 774-3475.

MOUNTAINFILM FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN FILMS, May, CO. One of country's foremost fests of mountain, environmental & adventure films & videos, held each yr in Telluride. Any film or video made w/in last 10 years that deals with themes of mountains or mountaineering, adventure, alpine peoples, environment or exploration & interpretation of wild places eligible. Children's program for films & videos with similar themes. Awards: Grand Prize for Best Film of Fest ($1,000), Best Mountaineering Film, Best Adventure Spirit Film, Best Environmental Film & Children's Film Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Early April. Contact: Dick Silverman, director, Mountainfilm Festival of Mountain Films, Box 1088, 308 N. Willow, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 728-4123; fax: (970) 728-6458.

NEWARK BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, July, NJ. 6 wk summer fest of films by African-American filmmakers & films featuring history & culture of Black people in America & elsewhere. Over 21 yrs of fest, nearly 500 films have been viewed by total audience of almost 85,000. Paul Robeson Awards are biennial competition. Accepted are noncommercial, ind. films & videos completed in previous 2 yrs in cats of doc, non-doc, animation & experimental. Original 16mm films & videos released w/in previous 2 yrs considered; industrial, commercial or studio prods ineligible. Committee representing sponsors & community arranges fest & selects films. Cash prizes awarded at discretion of judges. Fest is free to public & co-sponsored by Newark Museum, Newark Public Library, Newark Symphony Hall, New Jersey Institute of Technology & Rutgers University/Newark. Entry fee: $25 (Robeson competition). Deadline: Early April. Contact: Program Coordinator, Newark Black Film Festival, Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street, Box 540, Newark,

NJ 07101-0540; (201) 596-6550; fax: (201) 642-0459.

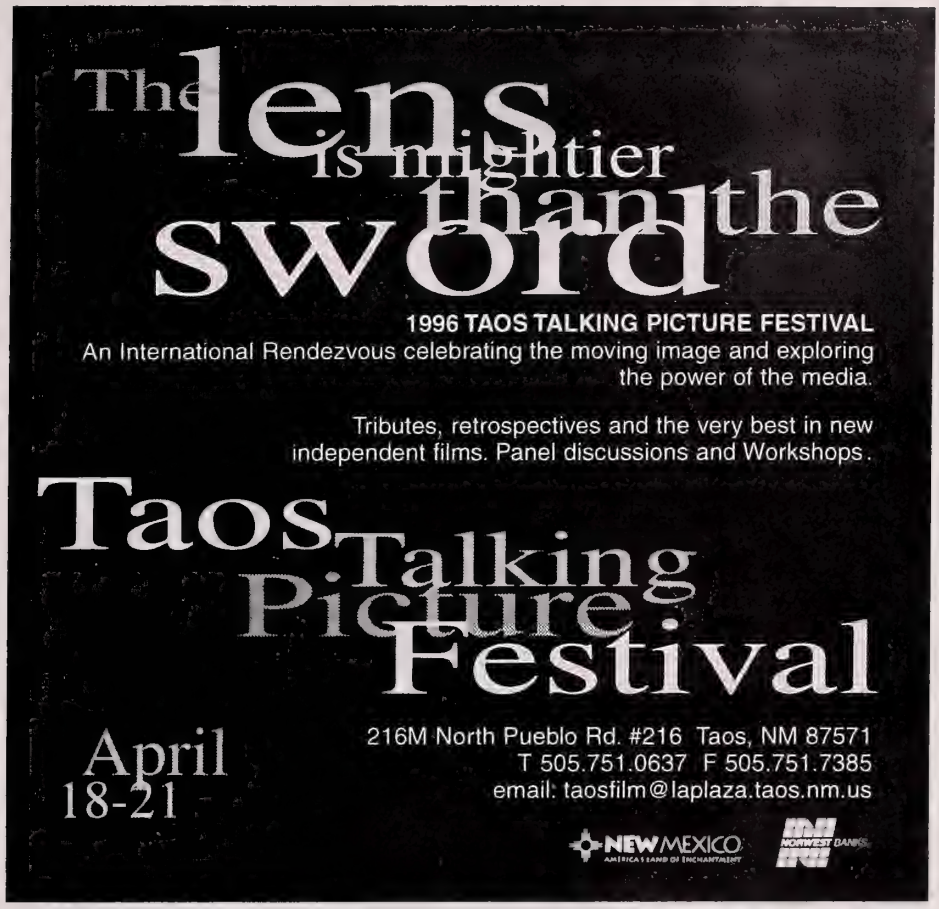
NIGHT OF THE BLACK INDEPENDENTS SPRING FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May, GA. Founded in 1992, fest is held on weekend in May & incl daily screenings & reception for participating filmmakers & press. Fest showcases about 20-25 works by African-American filmmakers. Entries must have been completed w/ in previous 3 yrs. Formats: 1/2". Entry fee: $20. Deadline: mid April. Contact: Peggy Hayes, founder, Night of the Black Independents, 830 Eastwood, Ave, Suite B, Atlanta, GA 30316-2414; (404) 627-9900.

ONION CITY FILM FESTIVAL, May 3-5, IL. Sponsored by Experimental Film Coalition, fest is "committed to excellence in exhibition of all vital forms of experimental film." Entries must have been completed after March 1, 1994. All genres of experimental film accepted. Entry fee: $25 members/students; $30 nonmembers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-8. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Johnny White, director, Onion City Film Festival, 1467 S. Michigan Ave., 3rd fl. front, Chicago, IL 60605-2810; (312) 986-1823; fax: (312) 384-5532.

OUTFEST: LOS ANGELES GAY AND LESBIAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, CA. Films & videos by &/or about lesbians, gays, bisexuals & transgenders eligible for fest, sponsored by Out on the Screen (formerly Gay & Lesbian Media Coalition). Features, shorts, docs, experimental & animations accepted. Out on the Screen also sponsors other programs, including mini-festivals each fall & spring, a monthly film & video series in collaboration with the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center & a partnership with West Hollywood Public Access for a semi-monthly cable program. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $10-$20 depending upon length. Deadline: Early Apr. Contact: Morgan Rumpf, exec. director, Outfest: Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival, Out on the Screen, 8455 Beverly Blvd., Suite 309, Los Angeles, CA 90048; (213) 951-1247; fax: (213) 951-0721.

PHILAFILM/PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July, PA. Founded in 1978, this fest is annual, int'l competition & marketplace for ind. film & videomakers. Each yr fest is thematically programmed, based upon dominant & current social issues such as TV violence, regional wars & conflicts or artistic features such as tributes. Premieres categorized by int'l, nat'l or local & invited as such. Cats incl. feature, short, animation, experimental, S-8, music video & student. Awards: Leigh Whipper Award for Best in Category (Gold, Silver, Honorable Mention). Fest administered by Int'l Association of Motion Picture & Television Producers & sponsored by City of Philadelphia & corporate sponsors. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8, 8mm. Entry fee: $20-$100. Deadline: Mid April. Contact: Charles B. Greene, general manager, Philafilm/Philadelphia International Film Festival, International Association of Motion Picture & TV Producers, 2623 Sorrento Drive, Suite A, Philadelphia, PA 19131; (215) 545-4862/879-8209; fax: (215) 844-8004.

FESTIVALS



1996 CALL FOR ENTRIES

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13TH ANNUAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL

JUNE 7-11, 1996

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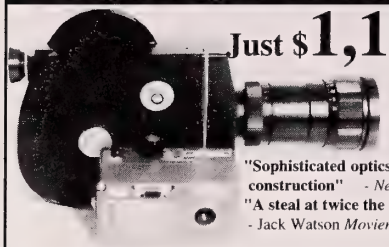
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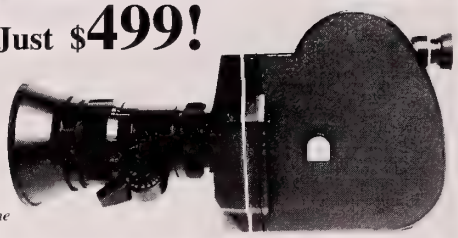
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FESTIVALS

FOREIGN

CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 9-20, France. The Independent Feature Project is working with Cannes to select fiction features for the Directors' Fortnight (Quinzaine des Realisateurs). For the 7th consecutive yr, the IFP is serving as the official US rep for the Directors' Fortnight. It facilitates preview screenings in NY in early March. For information on submitting features, contact: Mary Davies, Market Director, IFP, 104 W. 29th St., New York, NY 10001-5310; (212) 465-8200; fax: (212) 465-8525. For info on the Cannes Film Festival, please see the Jan./Feb.issue of *The Independent*.

EUROPEAN MEDIA ART FESTIVAL, Sept., Germany. Over 140 experimental films & videos, as well as computer & video installations, CD-ROM, text contributions & Internet projects showcased at this fest, one of largest annual events for innovative & experimental works in those fields. Open to "experiments, to the extraordinary, to all those working methods which, using the most diverse media, create intelligent, radical or ironic worlds of symbols & signs in today's digital age." All films & video works must have been completed w/in previous yr. Awards go to best German experimental film or video prod. Starting this yr there will be additional best of cat media awards. In special programs, current political, societal & artistic topics explored. An int'l student forum, retros, workshops & open air events are also held. Appl. for installations, expanded media & exhibition projects should enclose detailed calculation of costs, precise description, photo material & video documentation if possible. Site for installations is art gallery Dominikanerkirche. Selected films/videos compensated w/ DM4/minute with a minimum of DM40 & maximum DM160. Deadline: Late April. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8, Beta, 8mm, installations, Internet, CD-ROM. Entry fee: None. Contact: Alfred Rotert, director, European Media Art Festival, P.O. Box 1861, Hasestrasse 71, D-49008 Osnabrück, Germany; tel. 011 49 541 21658; fax: 28327; emaf@bionic.zer. de.

HIROSHIMA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, Aug. 22-26, Japan. Fest, now in its 6th edition, accepts animated "frame by frame" works including computer graphics animation. Awards: Grand Prize (¥1,000,000), Hiroshima Prize (¥1,000,000), Debut Prize (¥500,000), Special Int'l Jury Prize(s); Prize(s) for Outstanding Work. Entries should be under 30 min., completed after Apr. 1, 1994. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Deadline: Mar. 21. Contact: Sayoko Kinoshita, director, Hiroshima International Animation Festival, 4-17, Kako-machi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima 730, Japan, tel: 011 81 82 245 0245; fax: 011 81 82 245 0246.

HUESCA INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, June, Spain. Founded in 1971, competitive showcase for Spanish & foreign short film has aim of "the diffusion of image as a contribution to the better knowledge & fraternity among the nations of the world." Awards: Golden Danzante (500,000 ptas.); Silver Danzante to Best Film with Plot; Silver Danzante to Best Animated Film; Silver Danzante to Best Documentary; Bronze

Danzante. No thematic restrictions except no films dealing with tourism or publicity. Of approx. 400 entries received each year, about 170 shown. Deadline: Early April. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Jose Maria Escriche, comite de direccion, Festival International Cortometraje "Ciudad de Huesca" C/Parque, 1, 29 (Circulo Oscense), 22002 Huesca, Spain; tel: 011 34 74 21 25 82; fax: 011 34 74 21 00 65.

MIDNIGHT SUN FILM FESTIVAL, June, Finland. Founded in 1986 by Finnish filmmakers, this noncompetitive fest is held in Sodankylä, a small village of 3,000 people about 100 miles above the Arctic Circle, at the beginning of the Lappish summer, when the sun is out 24 hrs /day. Fest loosely divided into 3 sections: works of some of the "greatest directors of all time," new cinema & silent movies w/ live music. Films screened in 3 venues day & night. Fest specialties include nightly 3-D screenings in a circus tent, new Finnish films & fest trains, which take audience on a 2-day trip through Finland accompanied by moving cinema & live music. About 40 or 50 films shown each edition. Deadline: Mid April. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Fest director, Midnight Sun Film Festival, Jäämerentie 9, 99600 Sodankylä, Finland; tel: 011 358 693 614 523.

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA AND VIDEO, June, Canada. Founded in 1971, an important noncompetitive showcase for innovative, ind. features & shorts of all genres from over 25 countries. Known as an int'l meeting place for new cinema, video & new audiovisual technology, provides meeting atmosphere & extensive promotion for films & videos screened. Entries must have been produced after Jan. 1 of preceding yr & not previously shown in Quebec. While fest is not competitive, it offers awards, sponsored by Laurentian Bank, for Best Discovery in feature ($3,000), medium length/short film ($1,000) & Public's Choice ($1,000) cats and doc discovery ($2,000) of fest, offered independently by National Film Board of Canada. Fest also sponsors film & video market, w/ free screenings to encourage marketing, sales & distribution. Deadline: Mid April. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8, Beta, 8mm, installations. Entry fee: $50Cdn. Contact: Claude Chamberlan, director, Festival International du Nouveau Cinema et de la Video de Montreal, 3726 Boulevard St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2V8; tel: (514) 843-4725; fax: (514) 843-4631.

PÄRNU VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY FILM FESTIVAL, July, Estonia. Fest enters 10th yr in 1996 as scientific & artistic event aimed at supporting cultural survival & presenting films & videos which record human cultures in social, historical or ecological context. Fest does not accept staged, propaganda or tourist films or films "which are against human values or encourage hatred & discrimination between races, neighbors & nations." Competition entries may not exceed 60 min.; films 60-100 min. may be accepted for special reasons. No restrictions on awards, yr of production or dates of first screenings. Fest retains preview cassettes for library. Awards: Grand Prize (large Estonian handwoven blanket); prize for best film on survival of indigenous culture; prize for outstanding

FESTIVALS





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scientific docs, audience prize; other prizes to stimulate Nordic, native & young filmmakers. All prizes Finno-Ugric authentic handicrafts. Special prize in honor of Andris Slapinsh, Latvian anthropologist & filmmaker killed while making a film in Riga, awarded annually to the best native filmmaker w/ film or video about indigenous or vanishing cultures; provides cash scholarship or professional equipment as well as fest expenses. Special programs incl. survival problems of indigenous cultures & shamanism. $300 fee for optional attendance covers hotel, meals, conferences, screenings, excursion to one Estonian island, etc. Deadline: Early April. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Mark Soosaar, curator, Pärnu Visual Anthropology Film Festival, Box A, 10 Esplanaadi Street, EE3600 Pärnu, Estonia; tel: 011 372 44 43869; fax: 011 372 26 01247.

PESARO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA, June, Italy. Founded in 1965, noncompetitive fest is showcase for films by young directors &/or ind. works &/or works coming from countries new to film prods. Since late '70s, fest devoted to nat'l film prods (Arab countries, China, Spain, Japan, Latin America, India, Soviet Union, East Europe, Far East Asia, Iran, American ind., South Korea, etc.). Ann'l special event dedicated to Italian film director or film genre. Entries must be Italian premieres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Adriano Apra, director, Mostra International del Nuovo Cinema, Via Villafranca, 20, 00185 Rome, Italy; tel: 011 39 6 491 156; fax: 011 39 6 491 163.

PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, "GOLDEN GOLEM," June, Czech Republic. This FIAPF-accredited fest was created in 1995 "to help publicize film works in light of the changing face of Europe & the entire world," with emphasis "on harmonizing the interests of film creators, producers & film viewers." Program: int'l competition for features, segment for premieres of features, non-competitive screenings & market. Entries must be features on 70mm or 35mm, not presented in other int'l competitions or film fests & produced w/in yr preceding fest. Awards: Grand Prix (Golden Golem), Special Jury Prize & awards for Best Director, Best Performance by Actor/Actress. Deadline: Mid April. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. Entry fee: None. Contact: Antonin Moskalyk, director, Mezinarodnifilmovyfestival Praha Zlaty Golem, Golden Golem Foundation, Dlouhá 16, 11000 Prague, Czech Republic; tel: 011 42 2 232 20 68; fax: 011 42 2 232 79 83.

ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, "MESSAGE TO MAN," June 14-20, Russia. FIAPF-recognized fest accepts feature doc (up to 120 min.), short doc (up to 40 min.), short fiction (up to 60 min.) & animated films (up to 60 min.). Program incl int'l competition, best debut int'l competition & special programs. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1995. Cash prizes of $2,000-$5,000 awarded. In 1995, a total of 112 films from 24 countries were screened, w/ 75 participating in 2 competitive programs. 950 participants from 32 countries accredited, incl. 89 journalists from 9 countries. Fest provides room & 2 meals/day. Films screened in main competition hall

& St. Petersburg art houses. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $35 (incl shipping costs; feature-length films may incur more shipping costs). Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: U.S. coordinator Anne Borin, St. Petersburg Film Festival, c/o Marie Nesthus, Donnell Media Center, 20 W. 53rd St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 362-3412. Fest address: St. Petersburg International Film Festival "Message to Man," 12 Karavannaya, 191011, St. Petersburg, Russia; tel: 011 7 812 235 2660/230 2200; fax: 011 7 812 235 3995.

SOCHI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL-KINOTAVR, June, Russia. An int'l competitive event, founded in 1993, fast becoming major Russian fest. Immediately after the Cannes Film Festival, it "provides a rare opportunity for foreigners to get acquainted practically with the entire Russian cinema prod of the past year." About 15 features shown in int'l & nat'l competitions & about 40 in information & retro sections. Fest uses reps in different countries & takes recommendations from int'l film programmers. Invitational, w/ limited number of prods invited from each country. Deadline: Early April. Formats: 35mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Valentina Mikhaleva, program director/Mark Rudinshtein, general producer, Mezhdunarodny Kino Festival v Sochi, 35 Arbat Street, Moscow 121835, Russia; tel: 011 7 095 241 0772; fax: 011 7 095 248 0966.

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC–MARSEILLES INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM MARKET, June, France. Int'l market for professionals in docs is meeting place for producers, distributors, television buyers, et al. to discuss co-prods, sales & program acquisitions. "American Corner" is umbrella booth w/ preferential rates to draw in American buyers. In 1994, reps from Arts & Entertainment, HBO, National Geographic, PBS, WNET, Center for New American Media & Voyager Co. attended. Now also open to multimedia knowledge products. Video library incl screening booths, facilities for producers who do not wish to rent a stand & technical industries section. Symposia & informal meetings. *Vue sur les Docs*, int'l doc fest held during the same period of market, attracts 20,000 spectators & awards 5 prizes. Deadline: Early April. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: varies. Contact: Olivier Masson, managing dir., Marché International du Documentaire, 3, Square Stalingrad, 13001 Marseilles, France; tel: 011 33 91 08 43 15; fax: 011 33 91 84 38 34.

WELLINGTON FILM FESTIVAL, July, New Zealand. Noncompetitive fest, now in its 25th year, presented by New Zealand Federation of Film Societies & the Wellington Film Society. Fest developed to encourage screening of new films that might not otherwise come to New Zealand. Selections must be features or shorts not previously screened there. About 100 invited features & almost as many shorts showcased each yr. Fest is sister to Auckland Film Festival, which presents same program about a wk later. Highlights of both selected for traveling fest in S. Island cities Christchurch & Dunedin. Deadline: Late April. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Bill Gosden, director, Wellington Film Festival, Box 9544, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand; tel: 011 64 4 850 162; fax: 011 64 4 801 7304.

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Conferences • Workshops

ADVOCACY DAY: 1996 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy will take place on March 19th at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Carlos Fuentes will deliver the lecture. National Advocacy Day and related activities are tentatively scheduled for the following day. Contact Lissa Rosenthal at the American Council for the Arts, (212) 223-2787 ext.242, fax: (212) 223-4415

CINESTORY: A SCREENWRITER'S CONSERVATORY, sponsored by Columbia College Chicago & Columbia 2 Extension. 5 film industry writers & producers work w/ screenwriters on March 15-17 at Chicago's Hyatt. Offers small group roundtables on writing sans Hollywood formula. Indiv. & group sessions on developing cinematic ideas, script draft process, alternative access to screen. Contact CineStory at (708) 328-2094 or 1-800-6STORY; fax: (708) 328-2043; Cinestoryp@aol.com.

INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO WORKSHOPS IN TUSCANY, ITALY, offers 30 1-wk. workshops & master classes in cinematography, directing, editing, writing, producing & camera work. Also, 4-wk. introductory summer program for university students and others. Workshops begin May 5. Contact David H. Lyman (207) 236-8581; fax 2558.

THE PERRY GROUP is inviting writers to submit character-based unproduced TV comedies for The Comedy Lab, an invitational free workshop. Scripts will be staged in a four-workshop series beginning in June 1996. Send to Literary Manager, Gary Swartz, 221 Avenue A, #18, New York, NY 10009.

PLAYBACK 1996 brings together a diverse group of professionals to undertake the challenge of preserving cultural and artistic history recorded on videotape. Information recorded w/ video hardware susceptible to extinction if preservation techniques & standards are not defined. March 29, 30, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. For info, contact Bay Area Video Coalition, 1111 17th St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

REWIRING OUR NETWORKS: CULTURAL EQUITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY. 1996 NAMAC National Conference is part of an ongoing long range national effort toward community building betw. media arts, other community-based organizations, small businesses & entrepreneurial interests to identify & prepare for the opportunities and dangers of the Information Age. Berkeley Marina Marriott Hotel, March 29 - April 1. Contact Julian Low (510) 451-2717; fax 2715; e-mail: NAMAC @aol.com.

STORYTELLING FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM, an event sponsored by the Kauai Institute and the American Film Institute, will address recent trends in filmmaking, new media, graphic design, sound design, Internet design, and publishing with top figures in these fields. Hands-on digital workshops April 22-24, conference April 25-28, in Kauai, Hawaii. For info or to register, call (800) 999-4234 or (213) 856-7690; fax (213) 467-4578; URL: http://www.afionline.org.

Films • Tapes Wanted

AIR & SPACE NETWORK, a new cable & satellite TV network, is looking for programs related to aviation, space, space flight, exploration, astronomy, weather, etc. Biographies are also of interest. Fiction, nonfiction, docs, educational, informational, or general entertainment. Contact: ASN, 2701 NW Vaughn St., ste. 475, Portland, OR 97210-5366; (503) 224-9821; fax: 241-3507.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF GRAPHIC ARTS, Washington, DC chapt., in search of innovative live-action & animated film shorts for a 2-hr. film festival in June. VHS previewing by April 30. Tapes returned. Please contact or send video to AIGA Film Night, Marty Anderson Design, 804 D Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002; (202) 544-1596.

ARC GALLERY jurying for solo and group exhibitions for the 96-97 season. Two categories: All media, including performance, video & film; and Raw Space, a dedicated installation space. Deadline: April 30. Send SASE for prospectus: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 733-2787.

ART IN GENERAL seeks video works & guest-curated video programs for new monthly screening series. All kinds of work welcome, from experimental film & video to home videos; doc & activist to public access works. Send VHS tape (cued), résumé &/or brief statement & SASE to: Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013. For more info, call Joanna Spitzner (212) 219-0473.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows on VHS, S-VHS & 3/4", any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, ind. producer offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subject matter. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in series of 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, a Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, is accepting all genres, under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled with name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201. (716) 884-7172; wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; WWW: http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia and Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For more info contact Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION seeks films & videos by black ind. makers, directors, or producers for "Black Vision" portion of *Screen Scene*, weekly 1/2-hr show that previews TV lineup & latest theatrical releases. Contact: *Screen Scene*, BET, 1899 9th St. NE, Washington, DC 20018; (202) 608-2800.

BLACK VIDEO PERSPECTIVE, new community TV prod. in Atlanta area, seeks works for/by/about African Americans. Contact: Karen L. Forest (404) 231-4846.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS currently accepting works of any genre for ongoing *Public Exposure* program. Works will be considered for a bi-monthly "video-zine," open-screenings, galleries, clubs, rave-parties, nat'l public-access programs, submissions to fests, competitions & calls-for-works. Let us use our marketing skills to get your works seen. No fee to submit. Send 1/2", Hi8, or 8mm w/ SASE for tape return to: Joel S. Bachar, Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; witerain@nwrain.com.

CAFE Y PELICULA looking for films & videos for possible monthly exhibition. Students' work welcome. No payment; ongoing deadline. Send 3/4" or 1/2" with appropriate release, credits, awards & personal info to: Cafe y Pelicula, PO Box 362991, San Juan, PR 00936-2991; crubin@caribe.net.

CHILDREN'S MEDIA PROJECT seeks tax-deductible donations of film & video equipment. Needs monitors, cameras, decks, etc. 71 Robinson Ln.,Wappingers Falls, NY 12590; (914) 227-1838.

CINCINNATI ARTISTS' GROUP EFFORT seeks proposals for exhibitions, performances & audio/video/film works to show in their galleries. Experimental, traditional & collaborative projects encouraged. Contact: CAGE, 1416 Main St., Cincinnati, OH 45210; (513) 381-2437.

CINE CLUB seeks VHS submissions of ind. shorts for future programs. Send SASE & brief résumé to: Cine Club c/o Sophie Fenwick, 335 Court St., 82, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Also welcomes proposals from ind. curators & others.

CINEQUEST, weekly 1/2-hr. TV series profiling best of nat'l & int'l ind. cinema & video, looking for films/videos, all genres, less than 20 min. to air on 30 min. cable show. Work over 20 min. will air on monthly special in Orlando, FL, market during primetime. Concept of show is to stretch perceptions of conventional TV & expose viewers to scope & talent of inds. Submit on 1/2" or 3/4" video. Submissions need not be recent, no limit or deadline. Will acknowledge receipt in 10 days. Send pre-paid mailer for return. Contact: Michael D. McGowan, Producer, Cinequest Productions, 2550 Alafayia Trail, Apt. 8100, Orlando, FL 32826; (407) 658-4865.

CITY TV, an Emmy Award-winning, progressive municipal cable channel in Santa Monica, seeks programming of any length, esp. works about seniors, disabled, children, Spanish-lang. & video art. Our budget is limited, but we offer opportunity for producers to showcase work. Cablecast rights may be exchanged for equip. access. Contact: Lisa Bernard, Programming Specialist, City TV, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 458-8913.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel Univ., 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

HALCYON DAYS PRODUCTIONS seeks video segments (1-5 min.) by 15- to 25-year-olds for video compilation show. If piece is selected, you may have chance to be video correspondent for show. Work may be editorial, real-life coverage, political satire, slapstick—you decide. Just personalize. Submit VHS or Hi8 (returnable w/ SASE) to: Mai Kim Holley, Halcyon Days Prod., c/o Hi8, 12 West End Ave., 5th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 397-7754.

HERE, a nonprofit arts organization, seeks submissions of films & videos for 1995-96 season. 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", all genres & lengths. Installation proposals also welcome. Send VHS, resume & description of work to: HERE, 145 Ave. of the Americas, frnt. 1, NY, NY 10013, attn: film/video. Enclose SASE for more info. about upcoming season.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8") videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone to: In the Mix, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

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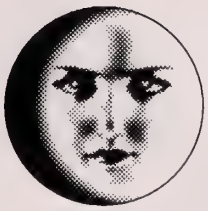
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IN VISIBLE COLOURS Film & Video Society seeks videos by women of color for library collection. Work will be accessible to members, producers, multicultural groups & educational institutions. For more info, contact: Claire Thomas, *In Visible Colours*, 119 W. Pender, ste. 115, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1S5; (604) 682-1116.

IND. FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, cable access show; seeks student & ind. films & videos to give artists exposure. Send films or video in 3/4" format w/ paragraph about artist & his/her work. Send to: *The Independent Film & Video Showcase*, 6755 Yucca St., #8, Hollywood, CA 90028, Attn: Jerry Salata.

THE KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject matter. Sent tape w/ brief bio to Lisa Deanne Smith c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013.

LATINO COLLABORATIVE, bimonthly screening series seeks works by Latino film/videomakers. Honoraria paid. Send VHS preview tapes to: Latino Collaborative Bimonthly Screening Series, Vanessa Codorniu, 280 Broadway, ste. 412, NY, NY 10007; (212) 732-1121.

MIXED SIGNALS, award-winning cable TV series produced by the New England Foundation for the Arts, is accepting submissions for an upcoming series. This year's theme: relationship between people & their work. Any style or genre, w/ 28-min. maximum & priority given to work under 6 mins. Submissions must be on 1/2" tape, though selected artists must provide a 3/4" or Beta broadcast quality tape. Payment for selected work. Deadline: April 8. For appls & additional info contact: New England Foundation for the Arts, 330 Congress St., 6th fl., Boston, MA 02210-1216; (617) 951-0010.

NERVOUS IMPULSE, nat'l screening series focusing on science, seeks films/videos. Open to experimental, non-narrative & animated works that address scientific representation or knowledge or interplay between science & culture. Send preview VHS & SASE to: *Nervous Impulse*, Times Square Station, PO Box 2578, NY, NY 10036-2578.

NEW DAY FILMS, the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film & video makers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. Conctact New Day Films, (914) 485-8489.

NEWCITY PRODUCTIONS seeks completed or in-progress docs on all subjects for monthly screenings. Committed to promoting ind. community by establishing forum of new voices. Have professional large screen video projector. Send cassettes to NewCity Productions, 635 Madison Ave., ste. 1101, NY, NY 10022; (212) 753-1326.

NEWTON TELEVISION FOUNDATION seeks proposals on ongoing basis from ind. producers. NTF is nonprofit foundation collaborating w/ ind. producers on docs concerning contemporary issues. Past works have been broadcast on local &

nat'l public TV, won numerous awards & most are currently in distribution in educational market. Contact NTF for details: 1608 Beacon St., Waban, MA 02168; (617) 965-8477; email: ntf@tmn.com; walshntf@aol.com.

OCULAR ARCADE, new on ACTV in Columbus, OH, showcases ind. video (art, doc, experimental). Send Hi8, VHS, or 3/4" dub to *Ocular Arcade*, D. Master, 135 West 1st Ave., Columbus, OH 43201.

OFFLINE seeks creative & independently produced videos. The hr-long show airs biweekly on public access channels throughout NY State & around the country. Submissions should not exceed 20 min. Longer works will be considered for serialization. Formats: 3/4", S-VHS, Hi8 or VHS. Incl. postage for tape return. *OffLine*, 203 Pine Tree Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850; (607) 272-2613; email: 72137.3352@compuserve.com.

THE OTHER SIDE FILM SHOW is looking for entries in all cats: narrative, doc, experimental, animation, etc. for TV series of ind. films/videos. Submissions should be under 30 min. 3/4" video preferred, but VHS acceptable. Send w/ SASE for tape return to U. of South Florida, Art Dept., 4202 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL 33620-7350, attn: *The Other Side*.

OVERWINED PRODUCTIONS, weekly intimate theater & public access program, seeks contemporary film/video in any format to be showcased in & around Detroit area. Contact: Patrick Dennis, 2660 Riverside Dr., Trenton, MI, 48183-2807; (313) 676-3876.

PLANET CENTRAL, new LA-based cable station focusing on the environment, global economy & holistic health, is looking for stories ideas & video footage for new fall alternative weekly news program *Not in the News*. Send info to: Planet Central, c/o World TV, 6611 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 871-9153; fax: 469-2193.

REEL TIME AT P.S. 122, an ongoing quarterly screening series, is now accepting submissions of recent ind. film & video works for 1996-97 season. Exhibition formats include S-8, 16mm, 3/4" & VHS. Send VHS submission tapes, written promo & return postage to: Curator, Reel Time, P.S. #122, 150 1st Ave., NY, NY 10009; (212) 477-5829 (x327).

REGISTERED seeks experimental & non-narrative videos about consumerism &/or modern ritual for nationally touring screening. Send VHS for preview w/ SASE & short description to: Registered, attn. Joe Sola, PO Box 1960, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009.

RIGHTS & WRONGS, weekly, nonprofit human rights global TV magazine series that resumes broadcast in Feb., seeks story ideas & footage for upcoming season. Last yr 34 programs covering issues from China to Guatemala were produced. Contact: Danny Schechter or Rory O'Connor, exec. producers, The Global Center, 1600 Broadway, ste. 700, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-0202; fax: 2677.

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um, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast! Submit to: EDGE TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

THE SPIRIT OF DANCE, live, 1-hr. monthly program covering all aspects of dance, seeks excerpts under 5 min. from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Produced at Cape Cod Comunity Television, South Yarmouth, MA. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

STATEN ISLAND COMMUNITY TELEVISION PRODUCER seeks experimental works, all subjects, by ind. video & film artists. The more explicit, the better; film & video on 3/4" preferred, but 1/2" &/or 8mm acceptable. Send tapes to: Matteo Masiello, 140 Redwood Loop, Staten Island, NY 10309.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED for exhibitions/screenings & collection of essays considering the relationsips between the Middle East & the West on a personal or geo-political scale. We wil be looking at crises of identity, nationalisms/borders, naming, gender/sexuality, class & the exoticization of difference. Send documentation of work in any medium, w/ postage if return requested: Public Domain, 186 Avenue B, #5, New York, NY 10009; ph/fax (212) 982-8967.

TOXIC TELEVISION seeks broadcast-quality, creative video shorts (under 10 min.) for alternative TV experience. Looking for works in animation, puppetry, experimental, computers, etc. Send VHS or 3/4" tape & résumé to: Tom Lenz, 6060 Windhover Dr., apt. A, Orlando, FL 32819.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

UNQUOTE TV, 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing new, innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, experimental, performance works under 28 min. Program seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote* TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS is accepting video & 16mm film in all genres for next season of programming. Fee paid if accepted. Send VHS tape w/ SASE to: Film Committee, UTICA, 88 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

VIDEO ICON, a new program focusing on innovative video/film art & animation, is currently reviewing work. Send VHS or S-VHS copy to: Floating Image Productions, 710 Wilshire Blvd., ste. 405, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 458-4550.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

WEIRD TV, satellite TV show airing weekly on Telstar 302, specializes in alternative viewing. Will consider works of 3 min. max., animation or shorts. Submit work to: *Weird TV*, 1818 W. Victory, Glendale, CA 91201; (818) 637-2820.

PUBLICATIONS

AEIOU.2 (ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION INFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE) provides descriptions and submission information on over 220 alternative exhibition venues, nat'l & int'l, regularly exhibiting challenging, alternative ind. film & video. Avail. for $7 (incl. addressed mailing label) from AEIOU.2, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, a computer index to over 19,000 prods on visual arts. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics & welcomes info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 9577.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO, organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange, seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To include work in this resource or for info, contact: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH GRANTS 1996, providing current information on nearly 6,000 funding sources, is now available. The volume is 1,224 pages and costs $135, plus 10% for shipping & handling, as well as sales tax in AZ & CA. To order, contact: The Oryx Press, 4041 North Central Ave., ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; (800) 279-6799.

FELIX: A JOURNAL OF MEDIA ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS published 1x/yr by Standby Program & Kathy High. Featuring articles & artist pages by established & emerging media makers, *FELIX* is dedicated to promoting dialogue around video art & ind. media. To order subscription or individual issue contact: *FELIX*/Standby, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 0563.

LIBRARY OF AFRICAN CINEMA now includes 25 titles from 12 countries representing 22 directors. Incl. in the 1995-96 guide are new docs, new feature films, a controversial South African TV series, an anthology of short films & a "perfor-

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MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at http://www.mediaalliance.org.

MEDIANET: A GUIDE TO THE INTERNET FOR VIDEO & FILMMAKERS available free at http://www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or contact rriddle@infi.net.

NOTICES

Resources • Funds

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on an ongoing basis. Contact BF/VF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 3540; e-mail: bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: During this fiscal yr, 8 artists will receive grants for 30 hrs. of subsidized use of The Media Loft video/computer suite at rate of $7.50/hr, in blocks of at least 5-hr segments. Grants awarded on ongoing basis to artists doing creative, experimental, narrative, language-based, visual, or conceptual video &/or Amiga computer work. Political, promotional, doc & commercial projects are not w/in framework of the grant. To apply, send project description, résumé, approximate dates of proposed use & statement of level of video &/or computer experience to: The Media Loft, 727 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

DCTV ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE is now accepting appls for $500 worth of equipment access on ongoing basis w/in 1 yr. When 1 funded project is complete, DCTV will review appls on file & select next project. Pref given to projects already underway. For appl., send SASE to: AIR, c/o DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10013-4435.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded are: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks. prior to project starting date. Degree students are not eligible to apply. Call (312) 814-6750.

INSTITUTE OF NOETIC SCIENCES announces a grant of $10,000 through a gift from the Hartley Film Foundation for production of a film or video that addresses subjects of relevance to Institute interests. Deadline: April 1. For info, contact: IONS, 475 Gate Five Rd., #300, Sausalito, CA 94965; (415) 331-5650.

LYN BLUMENTHAL MEMORIAL FUND FOR IND. VIDEO makes grants in video criticism, encouraging innovative & thoughtful writing relating contemporary video to identity, aesthetics, politics, history, popular culture & TV. The Fund also seeks to publish & disseminate essays upon completion. Appl. from Lyn Blumenthal Fund for Ind. Video, PO Box 3514 Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007. Deadline: March 14.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax 1114; e-mail: piccom@elele .peacesat.hawaii.edu.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr., $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center (ETC) is accepting appls Program offers opportunity to study the techniques of video image in intensive 5-day residency program. Artists work on variety of cutting edge & hi-tech equipment. Program open to experienced video artists. Appls must incl. résumé & project description, as well as videotape of recent work (if you are a first time applicant), either 3/4" or VHS formats, w/ SASE for return. Write: ETC Ltd., 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811;

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STANDBY PROGRAM is nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to providing artists & nonprofit organizations access to broadcast quality video post-prod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: The Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER is dedicated to educators who want to use video technology as a learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l and int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals or organizations. Also interested in creating a nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of the growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

COMPETITIONS

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION accepting appls for 1996 awards, given for work published or completed between Jan. 1, 1995 & March 30, 1996. Honorific awards for a published article or essay addressing oral history, a completed oral history project & to a postsecondary educator who has made outstanding use of oral history in the classroom. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Rebecca Sharpless, executive secretary, Oral History Association, Baylor University, PO Box 97234, Waco, TX 76798-7234; OHA_Support@Baylor.edu.

PRIMATOLOGY FILM COMPETITION: Awarding best films/videos produced since Jan. 1990, in both commercial & ind. categories. Five best in each will be screened at meetings of International Primatological Society & American Society of Primatologists. Send 3/4" or 1/2" NTSC tape, synopsis, entry fee ($25 non-professional, $50 professional) & return shipping fee ($10 US, $25 int'l) by March 1 to Charles Weisbard, Box 165, Rockefeller University, 1230 York Ave., NY, NY 10021-6399. For more information call (718) 274-2365; fax (212) 327-8634; weisbac@rockvax.rockefeller.edu.

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST accepting scripts from throughout US. 5 to 6 winners will be chosen to receive $500 cash award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: Ongoing. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop National Contest, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

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LEACOCK: *continued from p. 31*

RL: It's what television wants. Television should absolutely have what it wants, but I think it is a disaster. A lot of people think that *Happy Mother's Day* is a sort of mean film. I know a lot of people teach that. But we were invited back to screen it in Aberdeen, South Dakota, on the thirtieth anniversary of the quintuplets' birth. I was a little bit nervous about it. We screened our version, and we screened the ABC version, which is quite different. They love ours.

VL: They laughed.

RL: People that were in the film.

IND: Were you being mean, or were you being truthful?

RL: Irony is a better word. It's an ironic film.

IND: When did that ironic point of view appear? During the shooting, or did you go out there with that attitude?

RL: No, Joyce Chopra and I went out thinking we were just making this for money. It [the subject] was the dumbest idea I'd heard of. Who cares? We were embarrassed. And the more we saw, the more embarrassed we became, until in the middle of shooting it, we got together with Mrs. Fischer and her husband and said we will leave you be and just film the things that are public—and we did that. Of course, we could have been highly principled and said no to the whole thing, but we weren't about to do that.

IND: When Leacock-Pennebaker broke up, you started teaching.

RL: 1968.

IND: Had you taught before?

RL: Nope

IND: Did you want to teach?

RL: There is a God in heaven. Our company is going bankrupt, because of the idiot businessmen that ruined us. And my wife was suing me for something or other; separation, divorce, whatever. It was grim. Jay Weisner calls up and asked if I'd like to teach film at MIT. I'd made some physics film for MIT in the early fifties. I came up [to Cambridge] with a suitcase. Ed Pincus had already started the film school here.

IND: And you liked teaching?

RL: No!

VL: Yes, you do.

RL: I do, yes. As long as it's on a small scale and nobody takes it seriously. I loved MIT. The emphasis was on just making movies, being filmmakers, doing everything. Not on teaching people to be scriptwriters or directors.

And the whole Super 8 business. I thought maybe if 16mm didn't work, then maybe Super 8 would work. I was wrong about that. After I'd finished that, Weisner said, "Leacock, you've managed to replicate all the problems of 16mm in 8mm." (Laughs) I think he was dead right.

IND: But during your time at MIT you started teaching 16mm and ended up teaching Super 8?

RL: Video 8. As soon as the CCD [Charge Coupled Device] was invented, I was enormously impressed. One of the first things I did with it was film my friend Helga Feddersen. We made this film called *Gott Sei Dank* (*Thank you, God*) about her death.

She was a tremendously popular comedienne on German television. We had made a film together years before, and I had sort of fallen in love with her. Then I found that she was recovering from surgery at Boston Eye and Ear for a tumor behind her eye. Everybody said she was recovering, so I believed them. She was very frail and I spent a wonderful day with her with my first video 8 camera.

I didn't think I was making a film; I was just playing. Then when she died two years later, I said, "We should look at this stuff." And I realized, in a sense, that she was making her last testament to me. It was electrifying. And it could never have happened with a tripod or a crew and a microphone boom. The camera was sort of sitting on my knee with a bug-eye lens and she'd reach over and touch me. Then we combined it with the film that she and I had made together about a little Swiss composer who had composed "Oh! Mein Papa!" [Sings] *Oh Mein Papa ta, ta, ta, ta.* Famous popular song from the thirties or forties. It's a very, very moving film and I couldn't possibly have done it with film. It just wouldn't have happened. So from then on I just stuck with video and loved it.

George Fifield (gwf@tiac.net) is a video artist, adjunct media arts curator at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, and director of VideoSpace, an alternative media arts organization in Boston.

Statement of Ownership
Management and Circulation
(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. A. Title of Publication: The Independent Film & Video Monthly B. Publication number: 10778918

2. Date of filing: 2/1/96

3. Frequency of issue: Monthly
A. Number of issues published annually: 10
B. Annual subscription price: $45/individual; $25/student; $75/library; $150/business & industry; $100/non-profit organization

4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, New York 10013.

5. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, New York 10013.

6. Full names and complete mailing address of the publisher and editor: Publisher: Ruby Lerner, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, New York 10013. Editor: Patricia Thomson, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, New York 10013. Managing Editor: Sue Young Wilson, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, New York 10013.

7. Owner: The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, New York 10013. (nonprofit foundation)

8. None.

9. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates (DMM Section 424.12 only). The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.

10. Extent and nature of circulation:
A. Total No. Copies *(Net Press Run)* Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: 11,500; Actual no. of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 13,900.
B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales; Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: 5,200. Actual no. of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 6,372. 2. Mail Subscription (Paid and/or requested): Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: 5,000. Actual no. of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 5,001.
C. Total paid and/or requested circulation *(Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)*: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: 10,200. Actual no. of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 11,373.
D. Free distribution by Mail, Carrier or other means; Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: 500. Actual no. of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 1,500.
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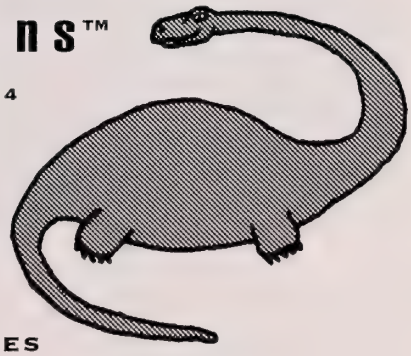
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MEMORANDA

MEMORANDA: *Continued from p. 65*

advance materials;

• Active participation in one or more committees as determined by the organization's needs and as requested by the board chair or executive director; fulfillment of commitments within agreed-upon guidelines;

• General support of the executive director and staff as needed.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members in good standing; you may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old. To make a nomination, send or fax (212/463-8519) the name, address, and telephone number of the nominee and nominator; we cannot accept nominations over the phone. Nominations should be sent to the attention of Pamela Calvert. We will also accept nominations at the AIVF annual meeting on April 26.

MEMBERABILIA

Criminals, a film by **Jeff Butcher** and **Nelle Stokes**, will be profiled in the upcoming book *Persistence of Vision: An Impractical Guide to Producing a Feature Film for Under $30,000*. The film showed at the Twin Cities' Shoestring Cinema Festival and the 1994 Independent Feature Film Market.

AIVF member **Diane Best** was won several awards for her half-hour documentary *Rights of Passage*, which tells the stories of four adolescent girls in societies where women are not valued. They are the CINE Golden Eagle, the Gold Award at the Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival & the Grand Award at the American International Film/Video Festival. The documentary is being distributed by CEN, Filmmakers Library, and Television Trust for the Environment.

Frank Green of San Francisco won the 1995 Joey Award from the San Jose Film & Video Commission for camera work on the documentary short *Headwaters Forest*.

AIVF member **Marvin S. Kaplan** has been elected to the Board of StageSource, Inc.

Slawomir Grunberg received the Best Journalistic Achievement Award at the International Ecological Film Festival for *Chelyabinsk: The Most Contaminated Spot on the Planet*.

AIVF members **Frances Negrón-Muntaner** and **Joe Sola** received $1,000 grants from the Lyn Blumenthal Memorial Fund for their experimental videos. **Louis Pepe**, a graduate student at Temple University, has been named Eastman Scholar for the academic year, and **Kenneth Steward** was a finalist.

MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) met in New York on September 30 and October 1, 1995. Attending were Debra Zimmerman, Loni Ding, Bart Weiss, Robert Richter, Robb Moss, Melissa Burch, Barbara Hammer, James Klein, Diane Markrow, Susan Wittenberg, and Ruby Lerner (ex officio). Absent were Joe Berlinger, James Schamus, and Norman Wang.

Richter nominated Moss for Chair and Markrow for Secretary, to serve until the regular January 1996 officer elections.

Board members volunteered for specific tasks in the coming year. Hammer will become the "point-person" on issues of censorship and disenfranchisement and will organize members around advocacy issues. Weiss will coordinate the production of a clip reel for use in advocacy. Moss will investigate the distribution of *The Independent* to U.S. cultural centers worldwide as library subscriptions.

Burch offered to help facilitate the co-sponsorship of regular events with NYC media organizations. Klein will more actively connect AIVF to the Ohio regional media organization and work with staff on student member recruitment. Markrow will focus on ways Colorado media-makers can interact and connect with makers nationally, and will work on distribution initiatives with Wittenberg, who committed to investigate ways to develop commercial television opportunities for independent work.

In terms of organizational development, Richter will recruit new candidates for the board and work to institute a joint membership with the Independent Documentary Association. Zimmerman will clarify the role of the FIVF board and AIVF/FIVF advisors, and will use her database expertise to help the organization.

Executive Director Ruby Lerner reported that AIVF has hired a new advocacy associate, Cleo Cacoulidis. The MeDIA Consortium has hired a staffperson, David LePage, also of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, so Cacoulidis will work closely with him to coordinate efforts.

Lerner also reported on the National Artists Advocacy Group (NAAG), a cooperative effort of the National Association of Artists Organizations (NAAO) and the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression (NCFE), to speak on issues affecting individual artists. The group's intention is to get involved in voter registration

and education on cultural issues. 75,000 names have been databased to date, coded by congressional district. There are also foundations interested in funding a feasibility study for a privately-funded Artists' Endowment as a possible supplement to the current system of public funding.

Hammer presented information on the attempt to defund the San Antonio arts council spearheaded by a gay publisher and based on "obscenity" issues relating to that city's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. The board authorized the president to send a letter in support of the arts council, the sponsoring media center, and the festival.

As directed by the board for the second consecutive year, ballots in the 1995 election were double-counted to determine if weighted voting materially affected the election's outcome. The results from both 1994 and 1995 indicate that the directors elected remain the same regardless of whether votes are weighted or not. In light of this consistent outcome, the board agreed that no further action would be taken regarding weighted voting.

Zimmerman led a discussion of board committees for the next year. The committees and their memberships were assigned as follows: Executive Committee: Board Chair, President, Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary; Advocacy Committee: Hammer (Chair), Klein, Ding, Wittenberg; Information Services Committee: Weiss (Chair), Richter, Zimmerman, Burch; Membership Committee: Markrow (Chair), Moss. Membership and Information Services will meet in a joint committee and separate as their work demands.

Treasurer Robert Richter reported that AIVF was in good shape at present, but the future is uncertain. The transfer of funds from AIVF to FIVF up to a $190,000 maximum was approved. The 1995-96 budget was presented and passed.

A board liability insurance proposal was presented, but deemed too expensive for immediate approval. The board agreed to research possible alternatives locally and communicate this to Richter, who would report at the next meeting.

Future board meetings are scheduled for: January 13-14, April 27-28, and tentatively June 22-23. The annual membership meeting will be Friday evening, April 26.

MEMORANDA

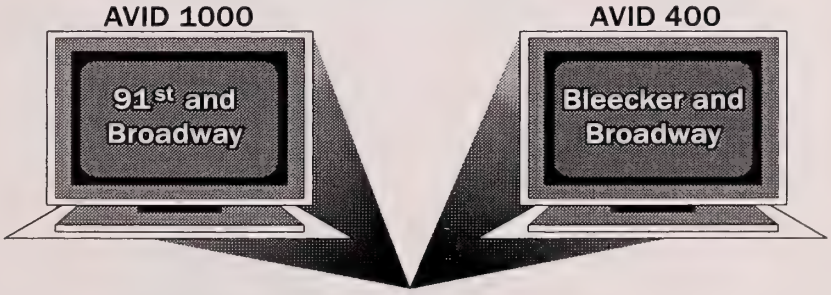


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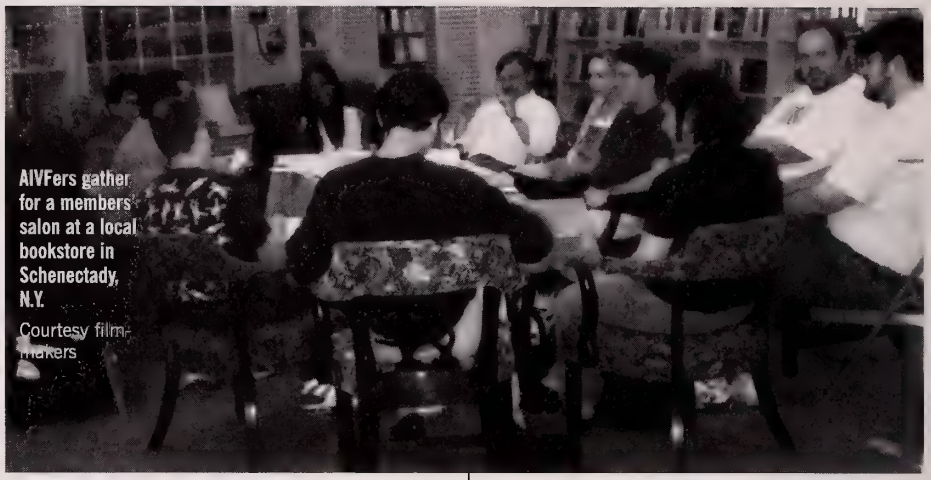
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Memoranda

BY PAMELA CALVERT



AIVFers gather for a members salon at a local bookstore in Schenectady, N.Y.
Courtesy filmmakers

CHECK OUT OUR WEB PAGE!

We've finally done it—we now have a World Wide Web address, where you can get up-to-the-minute advocacy alerts, selected material from *The Independent*, membership information, and other items of interest. As we become more accustomed to this new medium and are able to secure sponsorship, you can expect announcements of workshops, live chat, and other interactive opportunities. We're located within the Virtual FilmFestival site. Here's our address: http://www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF.

SPRING EVENTS

"IN THE WORKS" AN OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

Responding to popular demand, we have started a works-in-progress program for members. We'll be combining open screening programs with ones featuring invited works, and developing it month-by-month to serve the needs and interests of the members. The next one is scheduled for March 19 at 7:00 p.m. at our office. So call membership coordinator Leslie Fields to show your work, or come and see what's in the pipeline. *Four 10-minute slots per evening will be assigned on a first-registered, first-served basis, and are available to AIVF members only. You do not need to register or be a member to attend.*

When: Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Contact: Leslie Fields, (212) 807-1400 x 222

MEET AND GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF offices. *Free; open to AIVF members only. Limited to 20 participants. RSVP required.*

FISCAL SPONSORS
Find out how your production can become eligible for grants through nonprofit fiscal sponsorship. Representatives of the ***New York Foundation for the Arts***, ***Women Make Movies***, ***Third World Newsreel***, ***Millennium***, *and* ***Media Network*** *will provide information on their sponsorship programs, project acceptance criteria, services, and fees.*
Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 p.m.

SUSAN GLATZER
Director of Acquisitions, ***October Films***
Film distribution company representing independent features in North American markets.
Thursday, March 14, 6:30 p.m.

SUSAN WITTENBERG
Vice-President, Production and Programming, ***Ovation—The Arts Network***
New all-arts cable network with active acquisitions program.
Tuesday, April 30, 6:30 p.m.

COMING UP...

ADVOCACY MEETING

Next month AIVF will host a briefing on how the current political climate affects independents. Watch the April *Independent* for details or call Lisa Smith at AIVF at (212) 807-1400 x232.

ANNUAL AIVF MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The AIVF annual membership meeting will be held Friday evening, April 26, at Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, NYC. The meeting is open to all; AIVF members will receive a separate notice in the mail.

"MANY TO MANY" MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is a monthly opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Austin, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Susan Walsh (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera,
(718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Kansas City, MO:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Los Angeles, CA:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Swing Cafe, 8543 Santa Monica Blvd.
Contact: Pat Branch, (310) 289-8612

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Guy Perrotta (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

Schenectady, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6 p.m.
Where: Media Play, Mohawk Mall

Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269
March Special Event: Independent producer ***Ralph Arlyck*** *presents a workshop on* Media in the '90s; *Wed., March 20; call for details.*

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Washington, DC:
When: Thursday, March 21, 7:00 p.m.: "Marketing"; Monday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.: "Video Art"
Where: Washington Performing Arts, 400 7th St. NW (at D St.)
Contact: Rebecca Crumlish, (202) 328-8355

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

Denver's **PME Studios** now offers members a 15 percent discount on all soundtrack and audio production services, including composition, scoring, and recording. *PME Studios, 2201 South Cherry Street, Denver, CO 80222; (303) 692-8519. Contact: Craig Patterson.*

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

We have acquired the new edition of Film Arts Foundation's exhibitors' guide *AEIOU.2* (*Alternative Exhibition Information of the Universe.2*). The guide provides descriptions and submission information on more than 200 independent venues regularly exhibiting experimental and alternative media throughout the United States and abroad, and includes 50 new listings that did not appear in the first edition. The book is a key resource for independents who are self-distributing experimental work. Come to our library and look through it; if you are interested in acquiring a copy of your own, contact FAF, (415) 552-8760.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

It's time to think about nominations for the AIVF board of directors. Board members are elected to a three-year term of office; the board gathers four times per year in NYC for weekend meetings (AIVF pays the travel costs if you live elsewhere).

We have an active board; members must be prepared to set aside time to fulfill board responsibilities, which include:

- Attendance at all board meetings and participation in conference calls when necessary;
- Preparation for meetings by reading

Continued on p. 62

MEMORANDA

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, operation of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

The Center for Arts Criticism, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, National Video Resources, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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April 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3

Publisher: Ruby Lerner
Editor in Chief: Patricia Thomson
Managing Editor: Sue Young Wilson
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Intern: Tomio Geron
Contributing Editors: Kathryn Bowser, Luke Hones, Barbara Bliss Osborn, Robert L. Seigel, Esq.
Art Director: Daniel Christmas
Advertising: Laura D. Davis (212) 807-1400x225
National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Fine Print (800) 874-7082; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent film and video, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@ aol.com; http://www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF/ Second Class Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013.

Publication of *The Independent* is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Publication of any advertisement in *The Independent* does not constitute an endorsement. AIVF/FIVF are not responsible for any claims made in an ad.

Letters to *The Independent* should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length.

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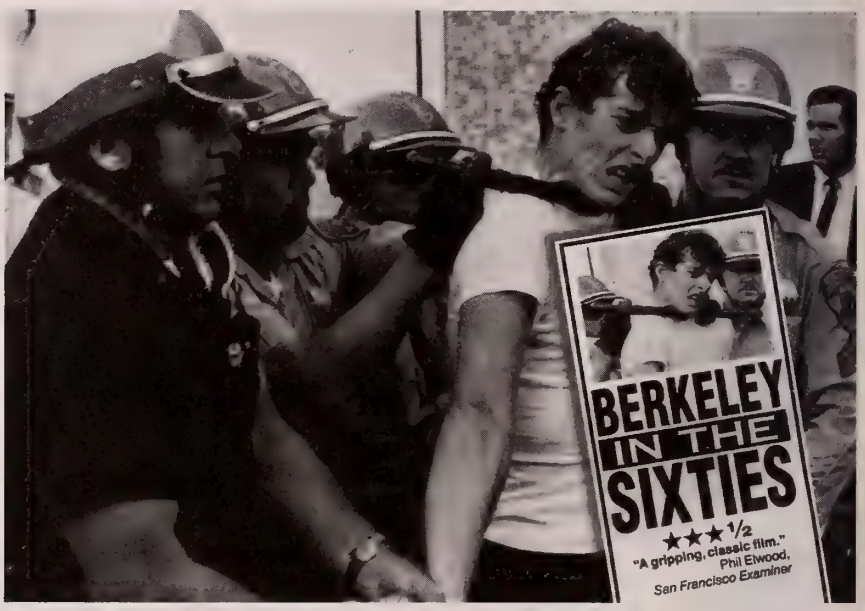
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* FIVF Board of Directors only

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Cover: High schoolers Patti and Emma (Lili Taylor, front, and Anna Grace) confront the harsh realities of teen life in the nineties—including date rape, teen pregnancy, and suicide—in *Girls Town*.
Courtesy October Films

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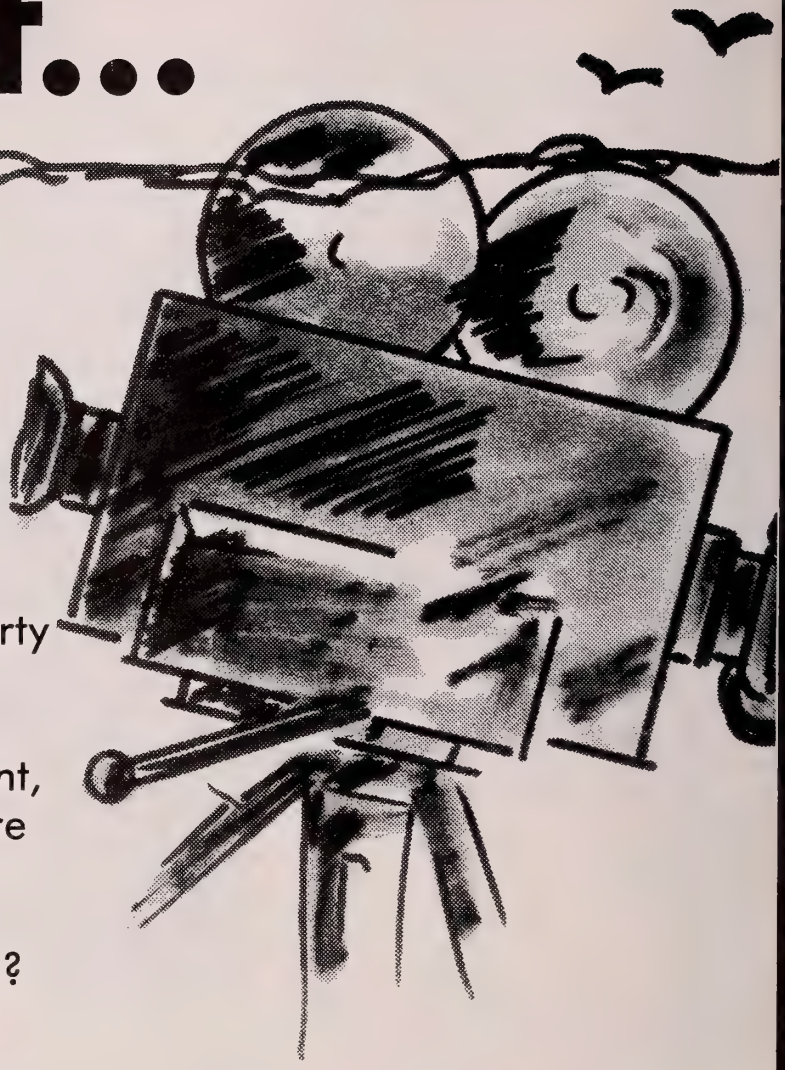
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media news

Overtaxed by IRS Releasing

Distribution Division Shuts Down

IT'S BEEN A TOUGH FEW YEARS FOR INDEPENDENT distribution. And now another distribution outlet has met its demise.

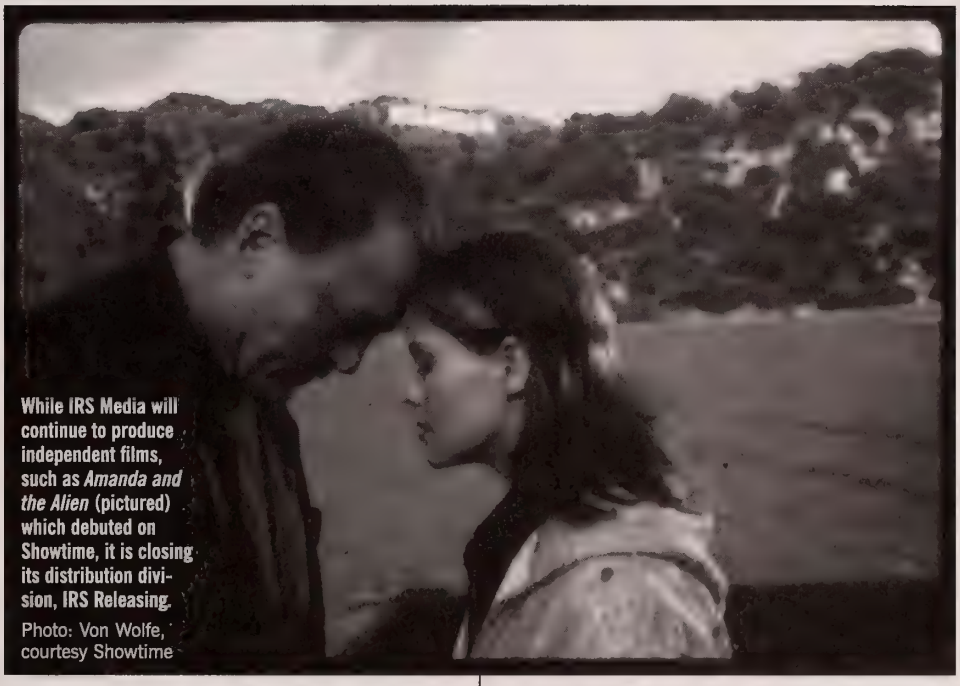
IRS Releasing, the distribution arm of Culver City-based IRS Media, Inc., has suspended its operations. The decision to close down came after then-president Paul Colichman left this past November to form his own production company.

Michael Lauer, IRS Media's senior vice president of business affairs, explains that IRS is no longer producing enough films to justify the expense of an in-house distribution unit. "The problem with theatrical distribution is that it is very overhead-intensive," he says. "If you don't have enough product to feed that arm of the business, it's just too expensive to run."

IRS Media itself is currently shut down, for a restructuring ordered by principal Miles A. Copeland. It will return to production by spring, but with cutbacks, according to Lauer, who adds that the company hopes to continue producing two low-budget features a year, the same number as in 1994 but a third of its output during its heyday in 1993. IRS is known for producing arty, high-quality, low-grossing films such as Carl Franklin's much-lauded 1992 directorial debut, *One False Move*, which had a limited theatrical release; *The Beans of Egypt, Maine* (1994), which made $37,000 at the box office; and last year's made-for-cable movies (both on Showtime), *Amanda and the Alien* and *Dead Weekend*, which was invited to screen at Switzerland's Locarno Film Festival.

Lauer says that IRS will maintain an active commitment to the independent filmmaker and will continue to hear pitches. "We have a keen interest in working with filmmakers to put out quality indie product," he asserts.

He says there's a possibility that IRS will someday regenerate its in-house distribution unit. The company's affiliated marketing consultants will also remain based in its offices. "Those same people will probably continue on as a separate entity," Lauer says. "They haven't all disappeared."



While IRS Media will continue to produce independent films, such as *Amanda and the Alien* (pictured) which debuted on Showtime, it is closing its distribution division, IRS Releasing.
Photo: Von Wolfe, courtesy Showtime

Meanwhile, former IRS president Paul Colichman's West L.A.-based Regent Entertainment, Inc., although so new that at presstime it has not yet announced itself in detail to the entertainment media, is already in production on *Twilight of the Golds*, based on the Broadway play, and a made-for-cable movie for Showtime, *Menno's Mind*. Still very much involved in indie distribution, Colichman claims he is prepared to fill the gap created by IRS Releasing's demise by reaching out to independent filmmakers: "We're always interested, always looking."

JULIA ROBINSON SHIMIZU

Julia Robinson Shimizu is a former film actor and a freelance writer in Los Angeles.

MoMA Film Library Girdles Acquisitions Budget

It's been argued that film history has been defined by what's available from the Museum of Modern Art's Circulating Film Library in New York. Certainly, the library's scholars and curators have painted a picture of the medium with a broader brush than almost any other such group. Now, however, the library is scaling back, trying to trim its sails to safely navigate the lean, mean, and video-obsessed modern age.

"Rumors of our demise are greatly exaggerated," quips curator William Sloan, but he leaves little doubt that, in light of a decrease in its operating budget this year of more than 20 percent, the library must reevaluate its mission and cut its spending.

And one thing it will no longer be able to afford is to make acquisition of new independents a priority. "We're going back to our roots

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Facing a 20 percent budget cut, MoMA's Circulating Film Library has stopped acquiring work by new directors. It's also no longer able to rent its collection of Andy Warhol movies, including *Chelsea Girls* (pictured).
Courtesy MoMA Circulating Film & Video Library

again...and building up the early cinema...the heart of the collection," Sloan says. "[But] we aren't going out looking for new filmmakers."

The curator of the library since 1981, Sloan recalls happier days for acquisitions. The library collected many independent films of the fifties and sixties, such as Lionel Rogosin's *On the Bowery* (1956) and *Come Back Africa* (1960) and Robert Kramer's *The Edge* (1967), *Ice* (1969), and *Milestones* (1975). In recent years, it has acquired works by contemporary independents such as Ernie Gehr, Suzan Pitt, Alan Berliner, and Joanna Priestley.

The library's film booker, Marilyn Mancino, recalls how "in the eighties...we would take on [a filmmaker's] entire body of work, even though many of the films don't go out." Sloan says that they now "just don't have [the] luxury" of such an ambitious acquisition policy.

According to Mancino, all contracts with filmmakers are being re-negotiated, with the museum asking for a higher share of rental income even from independents ("We're making everybody equal," Mancino says) in return for handling some lab costs. Another sign of tough times: Although Sloan is actually retired, no replacement for him has been hired, so he continues to come in three days per week on a volunteer basis.

The library has always had to pay its own day-to-day expenses, "everything from salaries to office supplies," according to the library's financial specialist, Kitty Cleary. While some grants given to the museum's department of film (of which the library is a program) include some money for specific library projects, the department does not actively solicit grants specifically for print circulation. "Their main focus is on preservation," Cleary says. "We're definitely not at the top of the priority list."

And the library is having more trouble making independent work pay for itself, Sloan says, noting that its former bread and butter was "an academic audience" and that the academic study of film is currently undergoing much fluctuation. And, as distributors frequently gripe, universities are increasingly using video rather than 16mm film, while the library is almost entirely 16mm, with a few 35mm prints. "Sixteen-millimeter distribution has totally changed in the nineties," says Mancino. "Universities no longer have the facilities or the technicians to deal with sixteen-millimeter film. We haven't kept up with the times." Sloan also notes that it can take a long time for a teacher to become comfortable enough with new work to want to rent it regularly.

Nonetheless, the library has been a terrific source of material for broad-minded teachers, and many regret the belt-tightening. "There are films that are not available except at MoMA," says David Tafler, a member of the communications faculty at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Penn. "[Library staff] are extremely helpful, and [the] prices are reasonable." Tafler cites the films of Kenneth Anger, such as *Rabbit's Moon*, as among those he has been able to rent only at MoMA. "I think that some of the earlier versions of those films are superior to the later ones that have been re-edited, and [at MoMA] you have the option of renting the early version or the more recent version," he says. "That kind of archiving is just fantastic."

The decision of the Andy Warhol Foundation to pull all of the late artist's films from circulation was also a serious blow to the library. While there has been no decision as to the films' ultimate fate, since July the library has been under instructions not to let them out, says Mancino. It previously distributed *Empire*, *Blow Job*, *Eat*, *Kiss*, *Sleep*, and others and made considerable money from the rentals.

On a brighter note, however, another part of the museum's film department—its 12,000-film archive—is being moved to a brand-new film preservation center, a $12 million facility in northeastern Pennsylvania slated for completion this summer. The project was funded in part by an $800,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

JERRY WHITE

Jerry White is on the program staff of the Neighborhood Film/Video Project and the Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema.

Good Fellowship: Proving the Case for Arts Funding

Spurred on by the major cuts in state and federal funding for the media arts and politicians' clear lack of understanding, in particular, of the function and value of small, regional grants, two Philadelphia media artists recently decided to carry out the first comprehensive survey of how one such grant program has helped its winners.

The Mid Atlantic Regional Media Arts Fellowship Program (MARMAF) was an National Endowment for the Arts regional regrant program that from 1983 to 1994 served Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, New Jersey, Delaware, and Washington, D.C. When the program fell victim to funding cuts two years ago, two winners of past grants, Karen Lefkovitz, a member of the Termite TV Collective, and Margie Strosser, a freelance producer/director and former program director for Pittsburgh Filmmakers, decided to conduct a postmortem.

They sent postcards with their questions to all 130 grant winners (61% responded), have conducted five in-depth telephone surveys, and plan at least five more phone sessions.

"Looking at the survey numbers, we can see that the funded projects are being finished. And without the grants, they wouldn't be," Lefkovitz and Strosser write in their preliminary

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- Total MARMAF grants (1983 - 1994): 319
- Total number of grant recipients (may have received multiple grants): 130
- Total amount awarded (1983–1994): $1, 061,825.
- Average size of each grant: $3,328.60
- Was the project completed? Y 70% N 12.5% (17.5% still in progress)
- Would you have been able to do the project without the grant? Y 17% N 83%
- Did the grant enable you to get other funding for the project? Y 66% N 34%
- Did receiving the grant create opportunities to do other work beyond this project? Y 75% N 25%
- Was this piece as widely seen as intended? Y 67% N 33%

analysis. "All of those interviewed stressed the importance of 'seed money.' Especially for young artists starting out, these small grants (most within a $1,000 to $6,000 range) were a significant boost, financially and psychologically.

"[T]he grant was rarely enough money to complete a project. 'Its greatest value was at the starting level,' says one artist interviewed by phone. 'More than anything, it was a morale booster. And you can't put a price tag on that.'"

But many survey respondents secured additional funding after receiving the MARMAF grant, in some instances as a direct result. "One artist, for example, was able to get a private donor to match the amount of his award. Many people used the completed work as a submission sample for grants they received for other projects. Most respondents felt that the project created other opportunities for them, as well as the people working with them, to make more media art work. Surprisingly to us, most respondents felt that the funded work was viewed as much or more than they had intended, often outside the region, and in many instances, outside the U.S.

"In a field where it is difficult to establish legitimacy and reputations are built through cumulative steps, the [grant] program had overwhelmgly positive effects for the artists surveyed. The sheer amount of work completed, as well as the extent to which it was viewed, suggests a high rate of return on the NEA's investment in this program. We wonder why was it so easy for the NEA to wipe out a granting structure that was so successful."

The report, which its authors hope will be used by community and national media groups to save regional management of other small-project funds, will be available in its final form from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in Harrisburg.

For more information on the report, contact Margie Strosser at (215) 849-3867 or mstrosser@aol.com; or Karen Lefkovitz at kdurga@cpcn.com.

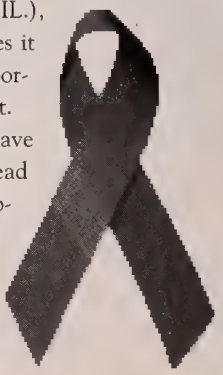
SUE YOUNG WILSON

Sue Young Wilson is the managing editor of The Independent.

SEQUELS

On February 8, President Clinton signed into law a new telecommunications bill that makes sweeping changes to the country's **telecommunications laws**, tearing down historic barriers between the local and long-distance telephone, cable, and broadcast industries while mandating various kinds of censorship of cyberspace, television, and cable.

The bill includes a measure making it a crime, punishable by up to five years' imprisonment or fines up to $250,000, to knowingly make "indecent" material available to minors over the Internet [see "No Sex Please: Congress and the Courts Threaten Censorship of Cable Access, Internet," December 1995]. It also contains language, added in Congress by Rep. Henry J. Hyde (R-IL.), that apparently makes it illegal to discuss abortion over the Internet.



The restrictions have provoked widespread protest from civil liberties and media watchdog groups and Internet habitués. Immediately after the President signed the

bill, the American Civil Liberties Union and other groups filed lawsuits challenging the provisions in court.

The bill also requires television manufacturers to install computer chips—the so-called "V-Chips"—in all new TV sets to allow parents to block out violent and other unwanted programming. Broadcasters and cable companies must devise a ratings system to reflect the amount of violence and sex in their programs; if they do not, a commission to be appointed by the President must do so.

A small victory for the public interest: the bill does contain provisions that protect public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access on future "open video systems" operated by phone companies, in the same way they are currently guaranteed access on cable systems.

Also, the Supreme Court has agreed to review a recent ruling by the D.C. Court of Appeals that cable operators may censor public access programs that contain "obscene or sexually explicit material," without violating the First Amendment. The ACLU and several media watchdog groups, outraged at the D.C. appeals court's decision, petitioned the Supreme Court for the review.

•

Four filmmakers have been named the first winners of awards from the **Minnesota Blockbuster Film Fund**, a program created by the video rental chain's local franchise-holders to support work by local independents by granting them interest-free loans ["Blockbuster Offers Funds to Minnesota Makers," May, 1995].

Orginally, there were to be three $25,000 loans awarded in 1995. But plans changed a little during the selection of the first set of winners this past fall. After more than 70 applications were reviewed and 10 finalists announced, the three final-round judges—Mark Lipson, co-producer of *The Thin Blue Line*, Marcus Hu of Strand Releasing, and Mary Jane Skalski of the New York-based production company Good Machine—couldn't narrow their choices to fewer than four. With the kind of common sense and equity common to Midwesterners, the fund's administrators settled the problem by reconfiguring the award and presented $18,750 loans to each of those four.

The awards, all for narrative proposals, went to Wendell Jon Andersson to make *With or*

In protest of the Telecom Bill's sanctions against "indecency" on the Internet, the image of a blue ribbon appeared on many Web sites the day President Clinton signed the bill.

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Blockbuster Award-winning writer/director Paul Zehrer works with Melora Griffis on a scene from his earlier film, *blessing*.
Courtesy Starr Valley Films

Without You, about a couple putting their child up for adoption; to Blue Kraning for *Tooth and Nail*, which follows a man's search for redemption in Michigan's North Woods; to Julia Rask for *Blue Earth*, based on a St. Paul newspaper's series of articles called "AIDS in the Heartland"; and to Paul Zehrer for *The Threshold*, a road movie that will wind its way through the wide-open landscapes of Colorado, Utah, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Illinois.

Since award winners are only required to repay their loans if they obtain full financing for their proposed projects and enter production, the applicants were judged on the strength of their financial plans and apparent determination to see their proposals through, as well as on the creative merits of their submissions. "It became clear to the panelists that these people really wanted to make their films, and they were going to do whatever it took to make them," says fund administrator Christine Walker. She adds, "When you're located here in Minnesota, you have to have that kind of drive and determination to get a film done."

Some of the first recipients have already seen progress on their projects start to snowball as a result of the awards. Within two months of last November's announcements, two of the winners were approached by private investors.

"I think there are people in town who were just waiting for any films to be identified as potential prospects," says Walker. "I'm not saying a lot of people, but a couple of very serious ones are coming forward."

Andersson attended the Sundance Screenwriters Workshop after being recommended by a Blockbuster judge and received some expressions of interest in *With or Without You* from Dreamworks SKG and Robert Redford's production company. Although the Blockbuster fund is designed to push projects toward completion, Kraning actually scrapped plans to shoot his film last winter once he received his award. The sudden boost in finances and recognition, he explained, afforded him a chance to spend more time on script development and pursue relationships with potential funders and distributors.

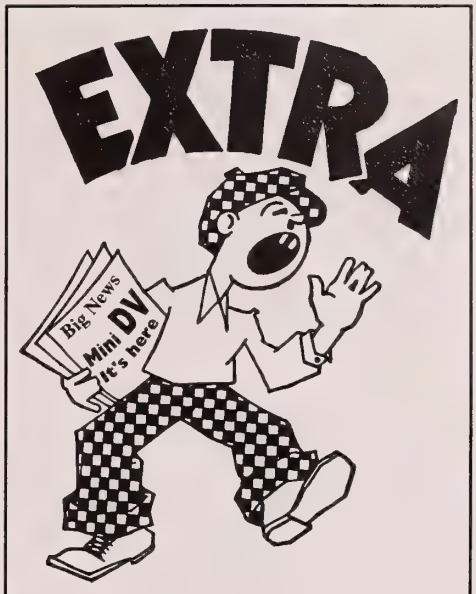
The future of the film fund itself has become uncertain, however. The individual responsible for setting up the fund, Mike Sweeney, then president of the state's Blockbuster franchise, left the company last summer, and franchise ownership shifted to parent company Blockbuster Entertainment. Although the original three-year film fund commitment is still guaranteed, support beyond that is uncertain. Last year's $150,000 contribution from the McKnight Foundation was a positive sign that led to the renaming of the program as the Minnesota Blockbuster-McKnight Fund. Ideally, the current crop of Blockbuster winners will succeed in entering production and help replenish the program by repaying their loans.

Applications for the 1996 Blockbuster-McKnight awards are due May 1. Guidelines can be obtained by contacting IFP North at (612) 338-0871.

SCOTT BRIGGS

Scott Briggs is a videomaker who also writes about art and culture in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

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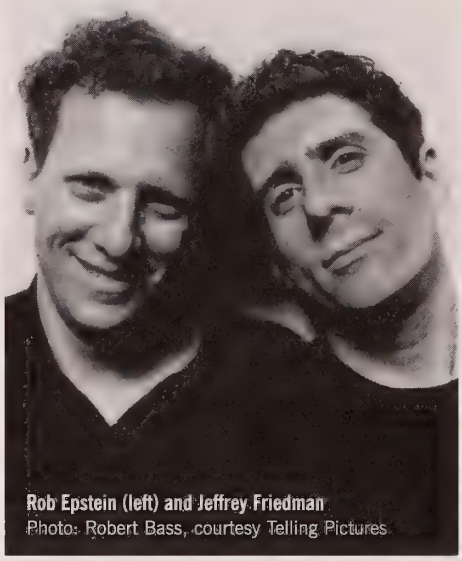
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ROB EPSTEIN & JEFFREY FRIEDMAN

the celluloid closet
OUTING QUEER IMAGES

BY MICHAEL FOX



Rob Epstein (left) and Jeffrey Friedman
Photo: Robert Bass, courtesy Telling Pictures

IF, AS EVERYONE BELIEVES, WINNING AN OSCAR automatically opens studio checkbooks and bank vaults, Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman would have slam-dunked *The Celluloid Closet* years ago. To all appearances, their adaptation of the late Vito Russo's groundbreaking 1981 book examining Hollywood's skewed portrayal of gays and lesbians in mainstream movies *was* a dunk, with the studios providing more than 100 film clips and Sony Pictures Classics snapping the film up for distribution almost immediately after its rip-roaring Toronto Film Festival premiere. But this success didn't come easy. In fact, the award-winning San Francisco filmmakers had to augment their initial seed funding from the U.K.'s Channel 4 with, of all things, direct mail solicitations.

"Richard Schmiechen and I had done a direct mail campaign on *The Times of Harvey Milk* on a much smaller scale," Epstein explains over bagels in the kitchen of the duo's Castro District house. "On that project we netted $15–20,000 with mostly local mailing lists, because outside of San Francisco people didn't know who [gay San Francisco city supervisor] Harvey Milk was." But it was enough to keep the project going. On this film we did it on a much grander scale: a trial that was very successful and a second run to half a million people."

"We were in an awkward place at the beginning," Friedman recalls, "because without knowing whether we could get the rights to the clips, we didn't want to take money, especially from the [gay and lesbian] community. That first infusion of Channel 4 money allowed us to determine that we would indeed be able to get the rights to the clips."

The torrent of individual donations netted somewhere north of $60,000—enough to sustain production for a year while Friedman and Epstein pursued additional funding from Channel 4, ZDF/Arte, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. However, the filmmakers were ultimately disappointed by CPB, which had consistently shown enthusiasm about the film from the beginning.

"The argument that we ended up having with them was over one particular scene, from *Red River*, where Montgomery Clift and John Ireland are comparing guns," Epstein recounts. "They said we had no foundation to claim homoerotic subtext. That became the definitive example of what our film was about, and they basically said our thesis wasn't sound." Friedman adds: "It was also clear from the materials that we gave them that our approach was going to be entertaining, and I think that disturbed them."

With the filmmakers running out of options, Lily Tomlin, who narrated the film, made a call to Michael Fuchs, then head of HBO. Eight minutes into a one-hour meeting, Fuchs greenlighted the film for HBO, which in 1989 had fully financed *Common Threads*, the duo's Academy Award–winning documentary on the AIDS quilt.

The currency of Hollywood contacts also proved crucial in licensing the 120 mainstream movie clips that Epstein and Friedman chose for the film. Brillstein-Grey producer Howard Rosenman (*Father of the Bride*), whom the filmmakers had previously enlisted as executive producer of *Common Threads*, called all the studio heads directly to obtain their support for the project. Once the honchos gave their blessings to release the vintage footage, the filmmakers had entrée to negotiate the legal details with studio functionaries.

Since credits are almost as valuable as cash in Hollywood, Bernie Brillstein and Brad Grey share executive producer credit with Rosenman. "Brillstein and Grey we've never met," Epstein laughs. "They did absolutely nothing on the film. They are phantom people, as far as we know." Friedman chuckles, then explains: "They paid Howard's salary while he was working on the film."

One of the toughest decisions that Epstein and Friedman faced—in addition to the perpetually difficult choice of which scenes to cull from nearly a century of Hollywood movies—was how to acknowledge the recent explosion of independent gay and lesbian filmmaking. "We had a whole sequence on new queer cinema at the end," Friedman says, "but we were never able to make it feel like it was part of the movie. It always felt like 'P.S.: Independent cinema.'" Epstein concurs: "There probably would have been a percentage of the audience that would have valued that and appreciated it, but ultimately it made for a more unwieldy film, and our tendency as filmmakers is to try to make pretty tight narrative documentaries." They ended up collapsing the footage into a montage that is, in Friedman's words, "Sort of our hopeful nod to the future."

The filmmakers joke that all the clips that were cut out of the two-and-a-half-hour rough cut will find their way into *The Celluloid Closet* CD-ROM. It's not exactly around the corner, but a multimedia project is in the works.

Of course, Vito Russo never envisioned CD-ROMs in 1986, when he informally agreed to allow Friedman and Epstein to film his book. It wasn't until after Russo died of an AIDS-related illness in 1991 that the filmmakers cleared the paperwork with his estate and officially acquired the rights.

But as *The Celluloid Closet* segued from preproduction into production, it quickly evolved from Russo's book into Epstein and Friedman's film. "We used Vito's book to write our initial treatments," Friedman says, "and to find the clips and what the analysis was going to be. We used it as a jumping-off

point. But once we started shooting interviews and editing, I feel that it became our film. The interviews took us off into directions that we hadn't anticipated."

Telling Pictures, 121 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 864-6714; fax: 864-4364.

Michael Fox is a San Francisco–based freelance writer. His last piece for The Independent *was an interview with Craig Baldwin in the December 1995 issue.*

▼

JO ANDRES

black kites

DIARIES FROM SARAJEVO

BY LAURIE OUELLETTE

"THERE ARE TWO STRONG FEELINGS AT THIS time. . . one is to make a fight for survival, and the other is to die," says Alma, the female narrator of *Black Kites*, Jo Andres's 26-minute experimental film about the 1992 siege of Sarajevo. In sharp contrast to the fleeting images of soldiers, burned-out buildings, and anonymous casualties shown on U.S. television, Andres focuses on the interior spaces of one woman's psyche when she is forced to live, along with her family and friends from an art collective, in the basement of an abandoned theater.

With shocking banality, Alma speaks of her everyday hurdles—burning sets and the parquet floor for fuel; learning to wash dishes with dirt in the absence of water. These verbal pictures are juxtaposed with descriptions of her emotional trauma and fear of death and loss. Andres succeeds in humanizing the effects of the atrocities at the most personal, basic level. "I wanted to create an awareness of what trauma feels like without distancing the viewer," says the Brooklyn-based filmmaker. "I wanted to deliver that feeling without delivering guilt, or the sense that we should do something when we can't."

Andres's intensely subjective approach benefits from her personal involvement with her subject matter. *Black Kites* is based on the writings and drawings of Alma Hajric, a Sarajevan visual artist Andres befriended in 1988, when they were both on tour with their respective theater groups in Spain. The two women struck up a correspondence, and Hajric visited Andres in New York. After the siege of Sarajevo, Hajric sent her journals to her new American friend and gave Andres permission to use them in a film; she even helped with the translation.

Hajric is a poetic writer, able to chronicle the physical and psychological effects of life in the basement shelter with reflexivity and jarring beauty. "We often fantasize about food," she writes, "fresh vegetables, a juicy orange." She speaks of longing ("On television they show advertisements with swimming pools, happy people...all these things are beyond your reach") and fear ("I know that life itself is stronger than the terror of my existence"). Her diaries are read aloud by singer/performer Mira Furlan and provide the voice-over narration for a series of silent dramatic reenactments, as well as the film's more interpretive visual material—newsreels, a fire, the diary, Hajric's artwork, and other symbolic imagery.

To duplicate the closed interior space suggested by the journals, the film was shot almost entirely in the basement of the filmmaker's home in Brooklyn. Actors Mimi Goese and Andres's husband, actor/director Steve Buscemi, and their three-and-a-half-year-old son, Lucian, silently but expressively perform the everyday acts described by Alma—talking, eating, cooking, and sleeping. Intermixed are sequences of what Andres calls "light painting"—colored shapes that move across the film's surface and, seemingly, in and out of Alma's thoughts, and which evoke a dreamlike, surreal sense of being. This imagery, along with the use of symbolic close-ups and theatrical lighting, bring Andres's stylistic interpretation to Alma's feelings and experiences.

Through Hajric, Andres was able to obtain a recording of Sarajevan children singing. Their voices were incorporated into the soundtrack, which also utilizes a traditional Bosnian folk song, adapted for the original musical score by Hahn Rowe.



Photo: Paula Court, courtesy filmmaker

Despite its reality-based content and rootedness in Sarajevan culture, Andres does not see *Black Kites* as a documentary film, at least not as traditionally defined. "I consider it more of an experimental film," she says, "because it is really my interpretation of the interior life of her [Alma's] mind."

With its dark subject matter and political subtext, *Black Kites* marks something of a departure for Andres, a

dancer and filmmaker whose past work has focused on formal experiments with shape, light, and visual perception for live stage theater. Earlier works include *Lucid Possession* (1988), a film/dance performance piece, and *Dreaming Out Loud*, a multimedia show presented at the Performing Garage in 1990, which a *New York Times* review described as using "choreography, films, and a collage of taped music to create dreams her audience could watch with eyes wide open with astonishment."

In a recent telephone interview, Andres was modest about the critical attention her film is receiving; many considered it one of the highlights at the Independent Feature Film Market last September, and it subsequently had a strong showing at Sundance. Instead, she prefers to praise her cast and collaborators. Andres dedicated *Black Kites* to the artists of the Obala Arts Center in Sarajevo—the collective with which Alma worked. They will receive a percentage of the film's proceeds and can also screen and distribute *Black Kites*, says Andres.

But Andres seems hesitant about the film playing any kind of advocacy role. "Alma Hajric" is actually a pseudonym, she told me, because her friend, who continues to live and work in Sarajevo, was "doubtful that the film would change anything" and "wary of having her journal associated with money being made from the situation in Sarajevo." Perhaps, though, Andres is too modest about her role in showing the human toll of the brutality and genocide in Bosnia, a toll that can seem so removed, so unreal, in the media's superficial reportage.

In one of the last scenes of the film, Alma tells of a dream in which she's running through a park, pulling a tangled thread of black kites and terrified that one will break loose and fly away. In Sarajevo, "a black kite is released into the sky when one's beloved has died," she explains. Andres's *Black Kites* humanizes the terror of life and loss under siege, creating empathy and a deeper understanding of morality and the resiliency of the human psyche.

Black Kites: Open City Films, 198 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013; (212) 343-1850; fax: 343-1849.

Laurie Ouellette is a media critic and doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

TALKING HEADS

THE INSTITUTE FOR ALTERNATIVE JOURNALISM & THE CALIFORNIA WORKING GROUP

not in our town week
ACTIVISTS AGAINST HATE

BY SUSAN GERHARD

Hate crimes may be on the rise, but so are community responses to them. Witness the impact of one nationwide media campaign, called "Not in Our Town Week." Widespread enthusiasm greeted this grassroots anti-bigotry campaign, which was centered around the broadcast of a recent documentary called *Not in Our Town*, produced by the California Working Group of Oakland.

The half-hour video documentary provides a look at how the workers, neighbors, and business owners of Billings, Montana, united to drive white supremacy out of their town in 1993. It was initially broadcast in September 1994 without much fanfare as part of *We Do the Work*, the California Working Group's public television series on workers and workplace issues.

Then, last spring, the video was shown at a meeting organized by the San Francisco–based Institute for Alternative Journalism (IAJ) in preparation for its Media and Democracy Congress, held this past February. Alternative mediamakers and journalists had gathered to look for ways to collaborate. Says IAJ executive director Don Hazen, "When some of us saw the *Not in Our Town* video, we thought that this was a really good case study."

Once IAJ got involved, *Not in Our Town* became the fulcrum for a nationwide series of political events, collectively called "Not In Our Town Week." The campaign linked the show's rebroadcast on more than 100 public television stations (which variously scheduled the airdate between December 17 and early January) with private screenings, town-hall meetings, and public discussions of hate crimes in cities all over the United States.

It was an ambitious undertaking, but it also happened to be a huge success. As Patrice O'Neill, who coproduced the documentary with Rhian Miller, recalls, "Every day some fax would come in to us either at IAJ or at our office in Oakland describing what people were doing in their own communities." For instance, they heard from a union activist in Bloomington, Illinois, who was nervous about a Klan recruiting drive in nearby Peoria. Says O'Neill, "He organized a screening at a local labor hall that included 150 people—union people, Jewish people, and African Americans—all talking about what to do about hate in their town."

The Billings, Montana, story provides some answers, such as reporting incidents to the police and media, as well as asking local businesses and community groups to take an interest in protecting both diversity and community safety. It seemed destined to inspire communities across the country. Originally, however, it didn't. After the *New York Times Magazine* published an article in July 1994 on what was happening in Billings, few media outlets picked it up. Only after the documentary's producers joined forces with IAJ did the story turn into a nationwide model for community activism.



On location in Billings, Montana, for the filming of *Not in Our Town*. Clockwise: Cameraman Blake McHugh, host Will Durst, and producers Patrice O'Neill and Rhian Miller. Courtesy filmmakers

With support or endorsements from groups as wide-ranging as the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force, AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers, Screen Actors Guild, and Long Island Council of Churches, the California Working Group/IAJ team created a network of activists and media outlets

interested in promoting the campaign.

Christine Triano, IAJ's daily coordinator of "Not In Our Town Week," found that "Putting independent radio or alternative newspapers in touch with local activist groups—facilitating alliances between local groups—really worked. Organizing this campaign was like scattering seeds."

"The theory here in part is how to echo things in the media," IAJ's Hazen elaborates. "What seems to be clear is that even important things that happen, things that are reported in the *New York Times*, don't have impact unless picked up by the other media, pundits, and talk shows. We are trying to explore an independent way of doing this, because the Right does it really effectively. If you do an effective job of framing something in the independent media, it increases the chances that the corporate media will pick up on it."

From the looks of a stack of articles O'Neill faxed me, they did. Pundits, editorial-page writers, and townspeople from all over the United States. got the message and spread it. O'Neill recalls, "In Kokomo, Indiana, a woman got really excited and took the campaign to police force. She wanted every cop to wear 'Not in Our Town' buttons. And they did. In Las Vegas a former hotel worker, with the help of community organizers and the mayor's office, called a press conference with city council and the police chief—and got coverage on three TV stations, as well as articles in three major newspapers," she continues. "People can look at the characters in the story and say, 'I can do that.'"

"It was really huge in Oregon," Triano adds. "The murders [of two lesbian activists] in Medford galvanized a lot of organizing in rural Oregon. The [video's] message is so positive and accessible to people. There's a real need for affirmative messages right now."

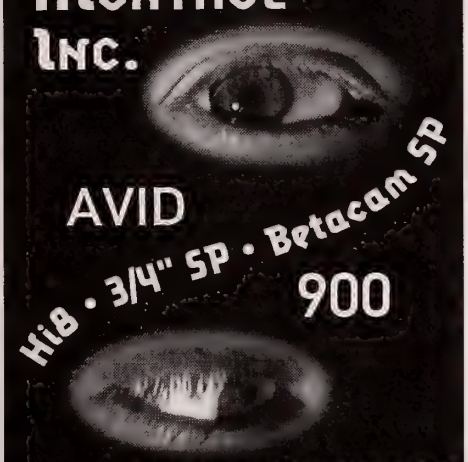
It's also clear, after this campaign, that there are groups willing to send them out. O'Neill, who says the "Not In Our Town Week" experience showed her there can be "meaningful discussion about issues," explains that the California Working Group would also like to see other people "organize the same kind of campaign around workplace issues, the changing nature of our economy, and how it's affecting our communities."

Visit the "Not In Our Town Week" site on the World Wide Web at http://www.alternet.org/an/NIOT.html.

Susan Gerhard is associate arts editor of the San Francisco Bay Guardian.

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Treasures of the Sierra Madre Oriental

Mexico's Mixtec Media

BY CHRISTINE MACDONALD

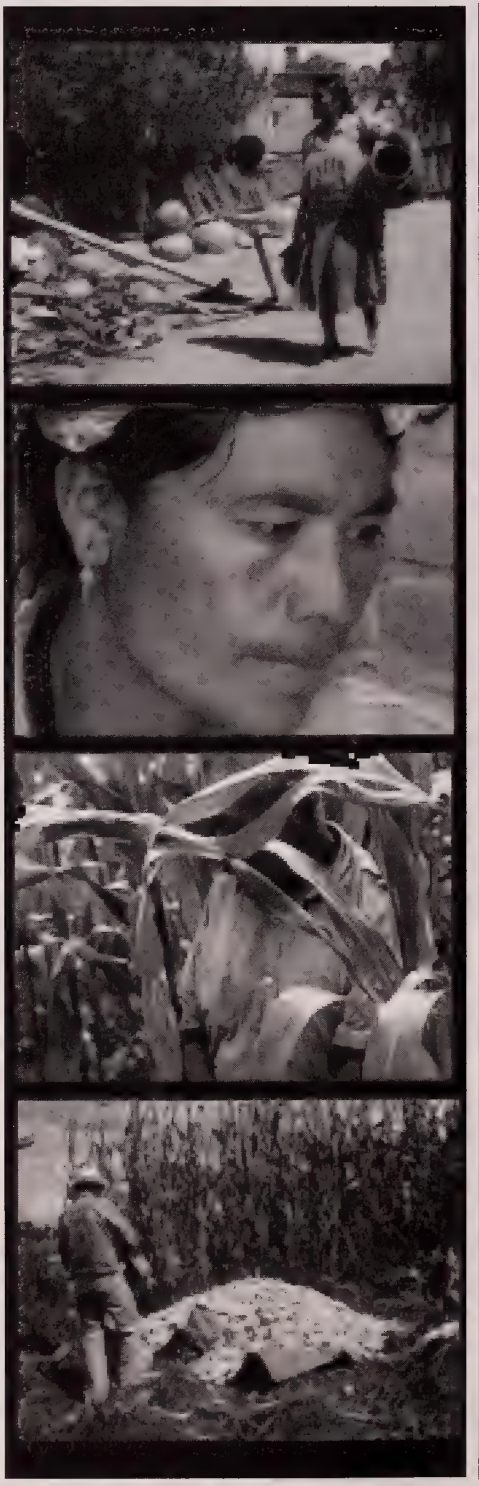
EMIGDIO JULIAN CABALLERO'S SHORT DOCUMENTARY *Viko Noute* begins with what is a commonplace scene in his town, San Antonio Huitepec, located deep in Mexico's Sierra Madre Oriental. A few peasant men, cowboy hats shading them from the high mountain sun, work a steeply sloping maize field.

Speaking softly in their native Mixtec language, they dig a hole, preparing the field for a sacred ritual. They decapitate a sacrificial goat and fill the hole with its blood. Then they pull out a bottle of Mezcal, the local brew made from distilled cactus juice, pass it around, and pour a large draught into the hole.

This is the Viko Noute or Water Festival, which village elders celebrate on March 1st each year. "We serve food and drink to the earth so that she will produce," Caballero explains. His people believe if they neglect the land, a terrible catastrophe will beset the community.

A full-time farmer and part-time video luminary, Caballero is one of a growing number of Native Mexican videomakers offering their stories to audiences in their own villages and as far away as the United States, Europe, and South America. *Viko Noute*, in Mixtec with Spanish subtitles, received warm receptions at festivals in New York City and Amiens, France, last fall. This and other work by Native Mexicans was screened at the Native American Film and Video Festival, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute, and at Toronto's Sovereign Currents Festival in 1995.

Videos from indigenous communities often expose the context of underdevelopment, poverty, and human rights abuses that form part of daily life for most of Mexico's 10 million native people. Yet these short documentaries, like the people who make them, place emphasis on the land and the ancient beliefs that tie them to it.



Caballero has set out to preserve local traditions. He says young people in his town have nearly forgotten their native language, the oral storytelling tradition, even the tale of their founding fathers. So, he recorded the local history in *Viko Noute*, convincing a village elder to trade a live audience for a camcorder's lens. Together, they preserved on videotape the centuries-old story of 10 village "grandfathers" who abandoned the Valley of Oaxaca to establish San Antonio Huitepec high in the sierra and far from Spanish colonial rulers.

"I could only find one elder who could tell me the whole story," laments Caballero.

Such concerns are driving indigenous videomakers throughout Mexico. They use the medium as a tool of a growing activist movement and to transport their ancient stories and traditions into the modern age.

The Mexican movement has been compared to that of Native American producers in the United States, such as Sandy Johnson Osawa and Victor Masayesva, whose work celebrates tribal traditions and offers similar spiritual perspectives and value systems.

However, differences between the two movements are striking, according to the Mexican mediamakers. While the Native American aesthetic focuses on individual artistic visions, the Mexican movement is a community-oriented endeavor.

"Native people in the United States and Canada are more concerned with reaffirming their identity," says Guillermo Monteforte, director of the National Center for Indigenous Video in Oaxaca, noting that the greater measure of autonomy enjoyed by Mexico's indigenous communities has protected Native Mexican identity. "Here in Mexico, people are more concerned with sur-

Unlike the U.S., the Mexican government actively supports video production by indigenous makers. Pictured here: scenes from the springtime water festival (Viko Noute) and pottery-making in San Marco.
Courtesy National Center for Indigenous Video

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vival."

Videomakers like Caballero are often activists who have acquired cameras and training. Their videos tend to be more amateurish, replete with camera wobbles and other technical errors. But their mission is utterly serious. The grinding poverty that forces many people to migrate in search of seasonal work and provokes land disputes and other conflicts between neighbors also threatens to destroy communities. These videomakers, says Monteforte, "are working to preserve community and strengthen native culture through video."

Some 54 activists from 37 groups in 15 states have received training since the program began. Virtually all of the funding comes from the government's National Indigenous Institute, or INI, which launched its video program in 1990. This kind of government support for indigenous mediamakers has earned kudos from native and nonnative people alike (although INI's dependence on the government has raised some doubts about the amount of artistic freedom the indigenous videomakers enjoy when it comes to criticizing their benefactor and the country's political realities).

"The idea was to give the cameras to community members," Monteforte says. His center was set up 1994 with INI funds and some private donations. Last November INI officials opened a second media center in Morelia, Michoacan, which will service producers in northern Mexico.

"Our role is to support and advise videomakers," says Javier Samano, who directs the INI program nationwide. "We are training people now, so that in the future indigenous people will run the centers."

INI officials were not first to bring media to indigenous communities. In the seventies, film made its way down a dirt road leading to the tiny town of Villa Hidalgo Yalalag, in the Oaxacan Sierra. A village movie buff started screening art films and agricultural documentaries in his living room for his neighbors. By the eighties, the community had purchased a camera for recording local festivities, land struggles, and other events of concern to the community.

In the two decades that followed, video cameras proliferated, especially in the villages of Oaxaca and Michoacan, where some of Mexico's worst poverty forces indigenous people to seek seasonal work in the United States. "They came back with video cameras to record weddings and town fiestas. Then they got ideas for other programs," Samano says.

"On commercial television, all they see are stories about rich people whose reality is far from their own," he continues. "They want to produce programs that relate to their lives."

And so they create programs about herbal medicine and age-old, nearly forgotten organic farming techniques. Caballero is planning a video that deals with local corruption and another on the hardships of migrant workers. *The Parikiutin Volcano*, by Valente Soto, tells of a devastating eruption in Michoacan 52 years ago. *The Making of the Mask* helps drum up new business for its authors in Jamiltetec, Oaxaca. In Quintana Roo, farmers produced a promotional video to help them sell crops to restaurateurs in the nearby beach resort of Cancun. In Pocoulum, Chiapas, indigenous leaders recorded health problems caused by the lack of potable water and sent it to the government to demand services.

Community activist Eugenia Martinez, a 23-year-old Zapotec Indian who recently attended a training workshop at Monteforte's center, has turned to video to help her village of San Pedro Quiatoni, another remote community in the mountains of Oaxaca.

"Where I come from there is hardly any water, and the fields are nearly worn out. We want to study the old ways of farming without chemical fertilizers to improve the harvest and care for the land," she says. The group has its own camcorder, VCR, and television set. Through the National Center for Indigenous Video, they will receive access to editing equipment and technical help, allowing them to produce informational videos on organic farming techniques and other community programs.

"In a year's time, we will have a record of what we have done, what worked, and what has failed. We hope it will lend continuity and direction to our work," Martinez says.

Video, a tool and a symbol of the modern world that has all but forgotten remote communities like San Pedro, will be especially effective reaching people of Martinez's generation.

"Young people today do not have the roots of our culture to anchor us, like the older people do," she says. "We want to use video to rescue the past, so it can help us improve the present situation."

While most of the indigenous work has been documentary, videomakers are beginning to experiment. "They are still exploring the medium and starting to make it their own," Samano says. "For instance, the Yaquis in the north of the country are really good editors, but they say editing kills the spirit of the thing." As a result, Yaqui programs sometimes last up to four hours. Since they have shown little interest in presenting the work outside the community, nobody complains.

But other native producers are very interested in attracting wider audiences. Many of them from across the country have come together to form the Mexican Organization of Indigenous Video Makers to promote and distribute their work. Several videos have traveled to festivals in New York, Chicago, Paris, Ecuador, and Peru. The Smithsonian Institute recently bought a dozen programs.

Even so, distribution and exhibition remain the biggest problems facing indigenous videomakers. Monteforte's group occasionally loads a truck with videos, a projector, and an electric generator and takes the show on the road like the last century's movie pioneers. Schools and churches occasionally double as screening rooms, and a few local entrepreneurs have converted their living rooms into video clubs. Two television stations run by Mixe indigenous leaders in Oaxaca and three stations run by the Roman Catholic Church in Michoacan also offer an occasional outlet for local work. Nevertheless, screening opportunities are few.

"My work has hardly been distributed," says Caballero, whose work has received mixed reactions. "Some people are not at all interested. Others see the value in conserving our customs."

The National Center for Indigenous Video plans to publish a video catalogue and rent cassettes to community groups, much like a video store with mail order capabilities. At the moment, however, the project is on hold while the group seeks donations to pay for 500 blank cassettes needed to copy work. Further, producers say they must resolve other philosophical problems that the modern medium has introduced into ancient communities.

"Video is a very specialized skill," Monteforte says. "When you teach it to a member of an indigenous community, you make him or her special and powerful. It disrupts indigenous community beliefs."

The National Center for Indigenous Video, Circuito La Cascada #103, Fraccion La Cascada, Oaxaca, Oaxaca, 68040, Mexico; tel/fax: 52-951-537-15.

Christine MacDonald is a freelance journalist based in Boston who reports frequently from Latin America

LONG RANGE ROVERS

BY MITCH ALBERT

Today's media arts landscape is a harsh Badlands, with funding sources parched dry and political posses keeping vigilant watch for troublesome Outsiders. Yet there's a heartening number of success stories to be heard. Here's a half-dozen encouraging tales about media arts centers that are surviving the nineties.



The House That Jon Built

A HANDSOME LANDMARK FIREHOUSE ON THE EDGE OF MANHATTAN'S CHINATOWN BEARS THE SIGN "Engine Co. #31, Battalion 2." Only the astute will notice a smaller, humble doorside plaque that identifies its owner–occupants: Downtown Community Television (DCTV).

"We must have more space than any other media center in the world," says DCTV helmsman and veteran video documentarian Jon Alpert, who cofounded the center 23 years ago with his wife, documentarian Keiko Tsuno. DCTV is indeed rich in space. After 16 years on the second floor of this vast building, the media center is quadrupling its space to 15,000 square feet. DCTV's new digs are diverse enough to include an attic espresso bar and an Avid room elegantly set off by tatami mats, shoji screens, and a futon. This is the media center your mother wanted you to marry.

Moreover, it is augmenting its equipment to allow low-budget mediamakers to cruise from pre- to postproduction on the most gossamer of state-of-the-art techno-wings, and all the while maintaining an unpretentious, compassionate, activist, and resolutely populist demeanor.

The purchase of the labyrinthine fire station last year was originally a joint venture between its two tenants, DCTV and the Chinese American Planning Council. The latter flirted with bankruptcy late into construction, saved only by DCTV's decision to buy out the council's 17,000 square foot share.

"It was touch and go at the beginning [of 1995]," Alpert recalls. "We overextended ourselves. We didn't expect to own the whole building and spent twice as much money getting it. But if the council had gone bankrupt, the judge could have ordered the building sold, even subjugating DCTV's ownership of its space. It was a dangerous situation that could have jeopardized our future."

Aided by a loan from the MacArthur Foundation, DCTV pulled off the purchase. They cut costs where possible, suspended some staffers temporarily, and became a landlord in search of a tenant. As of January, it appeared as though a French sculptor was ready to sign a lease.

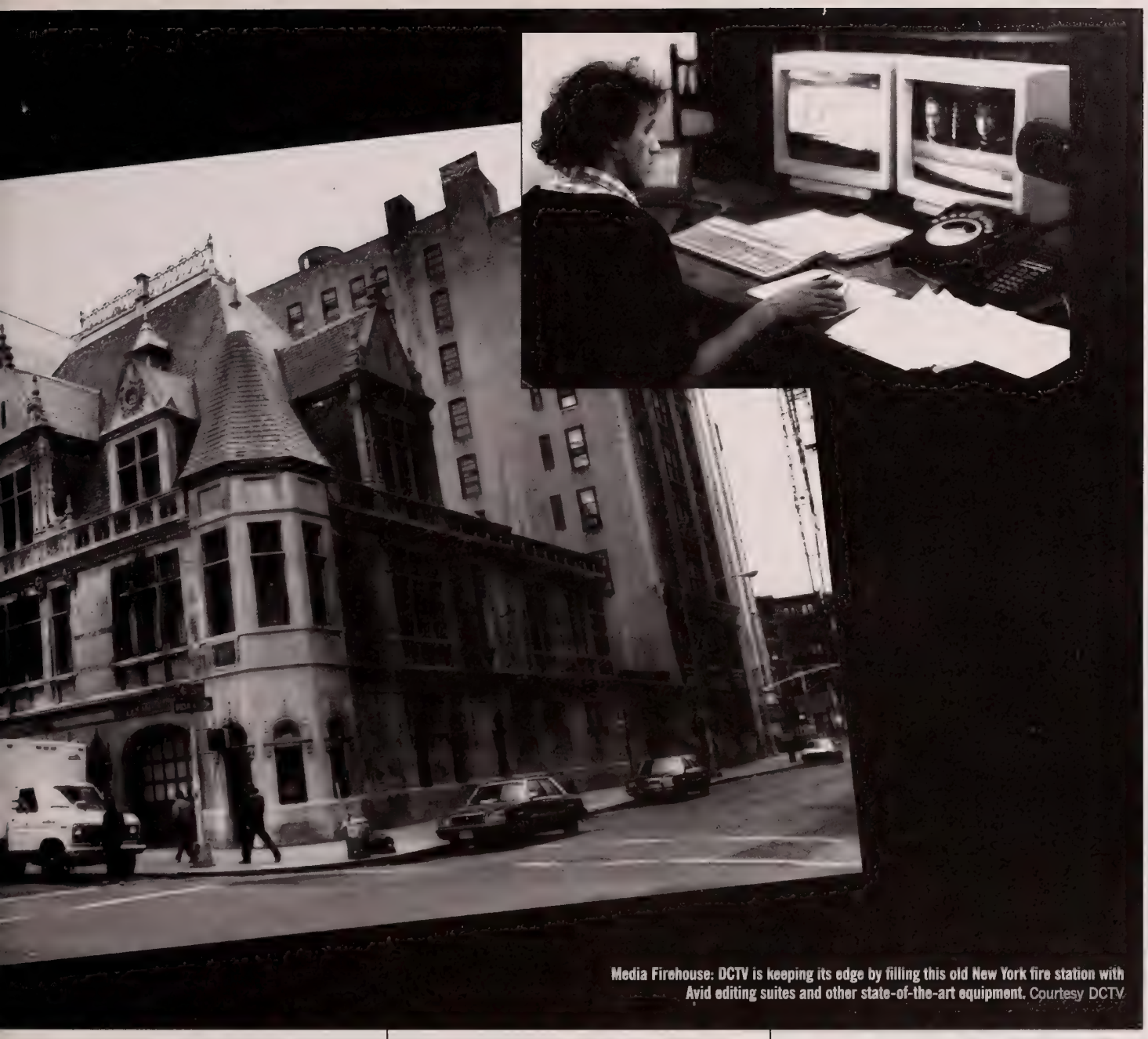
DCTV quickly began filling its extra floors—a sign of how ready it was to expand. Consider its offerings: five Avid work stations; workshops galore on video production, digital editing, the Internet, you name it—all at a price that's well within reach of the beginning or low-budget producers, Chinatown residents, and the community organizations that make up DCTV's primary clientele; an attic-level screening room and multimedia performance space; an equipment bank used by as many as 100 community organizations a year; youth programs and internships, and much more.

The big question is: how does this ship stay afloat?

"Very low salaries, long hours, sweatshop conditions," Alpert intones, as DCTV administrator and filmmaker Hye Jung Park covers her face in mortified laughter. Alpert continues his spiel: "No heating, lack of creature comforts for the staff, an absence of decent plumbing. We rely on the extreme dedication of the people who decide to stay."

What Alpert doesn't say is that DCTV has excelled in both grantsmanship and earned income over the years. The organization was the first-ever media center to be supported by the MacArthur Foundation, which subsequently—and with great enthusiasm, according to Alpert—developed sponsorship for similar media arts groups. They've also attracted support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Freedom Forum, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, and others.

MacArthur's latest grant, which enabled DCTV to purchase the fire station, came in the form of a $500,000 investment grant, which DCTV must repay over five years at three percent interest. "We'd be on the street without MacArthur," Alpert says. "Even the charitable arms of banks, which we've dealt with before, wanted 13 or 14 percent interest. With MacArthur, it was basically a handshake. We'll begin paying it back with the



Media Firehouse: DCTV is keeping its edge by filling this old New York fire station with Avid editing suites and other state-of-the-art equipment. Courtesy DCTV

new tenant's rent.

"Our responsibility is heightened now," Alpert continues, "because if we screw this up, we screw it up for a whole bunch of other people. We want to make [the Foundation] proud."

Alpert himself is one of DCTV's most energetic benefactors, through his willingness to put his money where his mouth is. As he discreetly puts it, "The bulk of our money is earned through broadcast licensing fees for our programs." Of course, "our programs" include his own successful productions, which have been sold to NBC, HBO, and other lucrative outlets. Alpert's "what's mine is ours" philosophy has greatly benefited DCTV.

"I'm basically just a salaried employee," he says. "DCTV pays me out of its operating budget. Any money made from any projects I work on goes right into the organization. My mother doesn't like that arrangement, but that's the way we've always worked."

The NBC link has benefitted the organization in other ways, as well. Alpert notes that Tom Brokaw, who sits on DCTV's board, has steered "half a million dollars' worth of grants" their way over the years.

Although licensing fees and distribution income do not quite outweigh DCTV's grant money, Alpert confirms that earned income "is an important part of our fiscal health. It amortizes many costs, so when the equipment needs to be maintained and upgraded, we can do it."

As for DCTV's stellar hardware expansion, much of the really good stuff comes via a sweet deal with Avid and Apple, negotiated on good faith and DCTV's proven track record of putting new technology to good use. "We had the first interformat editing in the U.S., and Sony told us it would never work," Alpert says. "We strung some cables together, and we made it work. We were a Beta test site [for Sony] eight or nine years ago, too."

Avid donated five Media Suite coediting systems; Apple promised to pony up the linkup computers. The deals enhance DCTV's ability to produce professional-quality material, and

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the relationships that DCTV forged with companies like Apple and Avid set an example for other media centers bent on survival with class.

With the new technology, "community TV is in a situation comparable to the early seventies, when ENG programming was just coming in," Alpert says. "In the beginning, the networks tried to keep independents out by challenging the signal quality of their work, although it was really the content they objected to. We have ensured, and we'll be able to continue to make sure, that high-end quality is always available."

A Dream Deferred No Longer

Less able to manage the kind of unfettered expansion enjoyed by DCTV, Third World Newsreel has mapped out a strategy for survival that allows it to regroup its energies before pushing forward, one battle at a time.

Founded in 1968 as Camera News, Third World Newsreel has as its mission the development and dissemination of "underrepresented voices," including women, people of color, and activists.

According to executive director Ada Gay Griffin, Third World Newsreel is "getting leaner and meaner as an organization." With last year's $300,000 operating budget already a sign of curtailed spending, "We're not going to be able to do ambitious productions as in the past," Griffin says. "We're not eliminating [the possibility], we're just not aggressively pursuing it." The New York–based center produced, among other projects, last year's *The Women Outside: Korean Women and the U.S. Military*, directed by Newsreel's corporate secretary and production director J. T. Takagi and Hye Jung Park, and the ITVS-funded *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*, by Griffin and Michelle Parkerson, which was acclaimed at Berlin and Sundance in 1995. Both films will air on *P.O.V.* this summer.

In 1991, Third World Newsreel received a major NEA Advancement Grant. The first phase involves a rigorous one-year self-assessment and long-term planning process, which Griffin calls "very arduous. It was very delicate. In our entire history, we had never taken a good look at where we were supposed to be going as an organization." She adds, "Planning has now become a part of our institutional culture." The self-assessment resulted in Third World redirecting itself, first by deciding to "strengthen our governing structure," according to Griffin. This involved implementing refurbished and more professional administrative policies and the creation of a whole new board of directors



in 1994.

Their new board is a winning roster that includes Amy Chen, financial director of the New Museum of Contemporary Art; Mary Lea Bandy, chief curator of the film/video programs of the Museum of Modern Art; and Cynthia Lopez, former executive director of Deep Dish TV. The board has been meeting regularly to formulate a decisive fundraising strategy to be implemented this year.

Part of this strategy is a greater emphasis on earned income by better utilizing one of Third World Newsreel's greatest strengths: its film and video collection, which include works by such luminaries as Charles Burnett, Gurinder Chadha, Lourdes Portillo, and Julie Dash. The new steward of its distribution operations, Veena Cabreros-Sud, was brought aboard for just such a task, and by all accounts has performed exquisitely. Griffin credits her with "revitalizing and pro-



Now that its films *A Litany for Survival* (inset) and *Women Outside: Korean Women & the U.S. Military* are finished and in circulation, Third World Newsreel will concentrate on distributing its unique film and video collection. Courtesy Third World Newsreel

fessionalizing" an area that had been somewhat out of focus in the past. Income from distribution has increased 150 percent over the last three years, according to Griffin.

"The collection is unique and excellent," Cabreros-Sud says of Newsreel's catalog. "It needed a little bit of a push for greater visibility. We've put together a lot of different packages for sale and rental, organized around issues critical to Americans, people of color, and the Third World. We've added new, important artists; expanded our marketing materials, and put out a new-release brochure," which organizes the work around such themes as health care, cultural conflict, sexuality, and gender issues.

In fiscal year 1995, $113,000, or 32 percent of overall funds, were derived from distribution. Griffin projects earnings of $140,000 for FY'96. "We've got to keep [earned income] growing," she says. "Survival depends on this." Griffin adds that the center is also targeting more private foundations, casting a "wide net" that aims to cover the gap left by reduced grants from state and federal arts agencies.

Also in the mix is new technology. "Third World Newsreel has got to become digital if we want to survive beyond the year 2000," Griffin says, noting that the organization is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary in December 1997. "We need to find ways of accessing and owning the means of production. CD-ROM, electronic publishing—this is going somewhere we've never been before." To that end, Griffin says, "we're doing our homework," which includes maintaining the presence of someone on the board who is fluent in the new technology (a role now filled by Louis Erskine, a nonlinear video editor).

Finally, Third World Newsreel pulls in a small bit of revenue from another steady source. "We train 12 economically disadvantaged artists a year in production workshops,"

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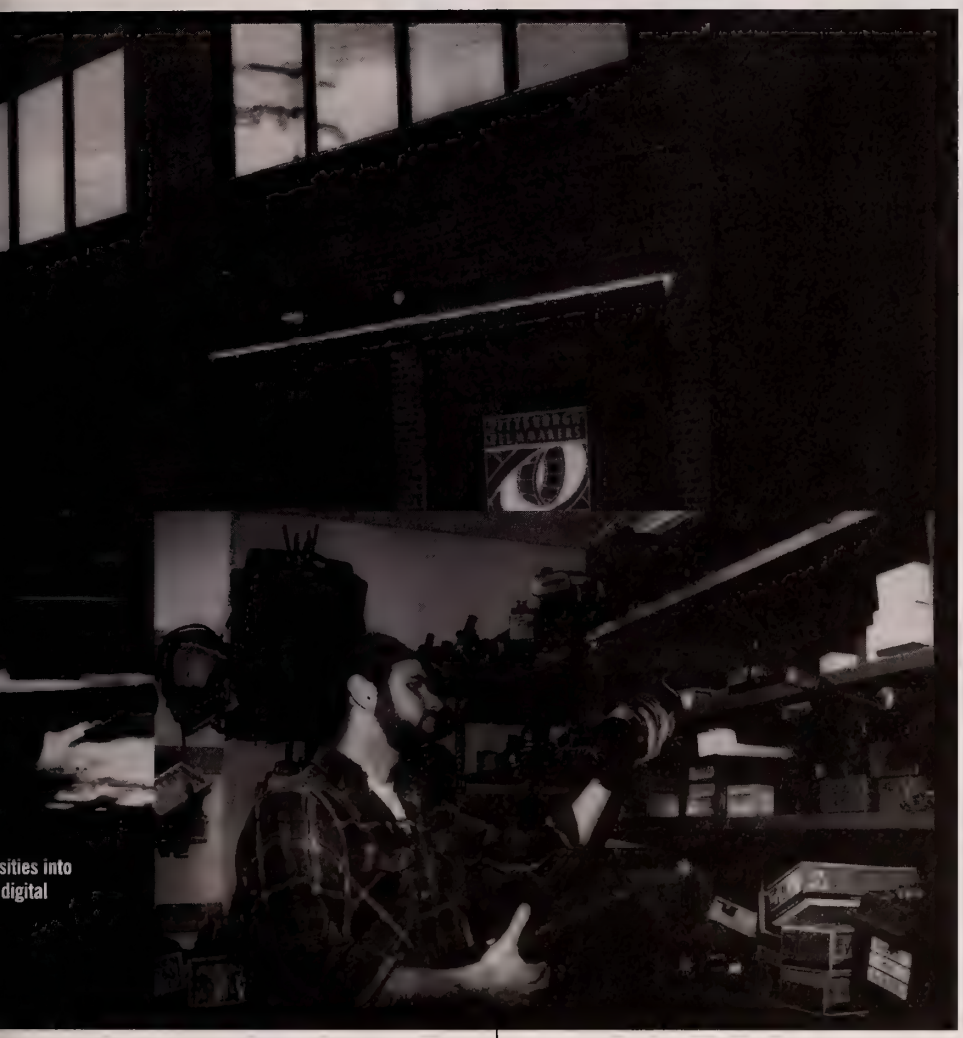
Pittsburgh Filmmakers has parlayed strong ties to nearby funding for a new facility with equipment stockpiles, editi imaging suites, darkrooms, and a gallery and screening s
Courtesy Pittsburgh Filmmakers

Griffin says. "They pay a nominal tuition—$450 for the year. It's not dollar-driven. Our motive is to empower underrepresented mediamakers and get their work out to a wide audience." Cherokee filmmaker Randy Redroad, director Bridgett Davis (*Naked Acts*), and 1991 Sundance Screenwriters and Directors Lab graduate Jamal Joseph are among the recent Newsreel alumni.

"Media skills are tools for empowerment, for sharing information not available elsewhere," Griffin says, explaining the mission, always the mission, underlying Newsreel's tenacity. "We must take the initiative in making sure people of color have leadership roles in the [media] field. It's not just an issue of art, it's an issue of underattended culture, of social justice. Even without art, we would have to exist. We're educators, and we're here for the duration."

A Well-Endowed Steeltown Dream

The lineup of facilities reads like a starvin' mediamaker's Santa list: a dozen flatbed editing



tables; online and offline suites; two Avids; new 16mm, video, and still camera equipment; abundant lighting equipment; new computers and digital imaging software; an animation lab; new darkrooms for color, black and white, and non-silver film; two galleries; a 133-seat screening room with 16mm and 35mm projection, and a 185-seat arthouse in downtown Pittsburgh that shows both first-run films and classics.

It's all part of Pittsburgh Filmmakers, and if you're studying there or are a member of this 25-year-old institution, it's yours for the asking—but you have to share.

"Our mission is threefold," says executive director Charlie Humphrey. "Education, exhibition, and getting media tools into the hands of those who need them, at low cost." Pittsburgh Filmmakers began as an alliance of artists without access to low-cost equipment who linked up with the Carnegie Institute, now the Carnegie Museum of Art. The museum is no longer affiliated with Pittsburgh Filmmakers, but it's just about the only such institution in town that isn't.

Education is at the core of all that is Pittsburgh Filmmakers. "The secret of our success is that, over the last two decades, we've established really strong ties to major universities in the area," Humphrey explains. Students at Carnegie Mellon University, Duquesne University, the University of Pittsburgh, Carlow College, and Point Park College all may take courses at Pittsburgh Filmmakers, both for elective credit and to fulfill degree requirements in film, photography, and communications studies. "For the schools to work with us makes sense," Humphrey says. "It's very expensive to start up a film program. Here we already have the expertise and all the equipment. We actually started quite small, just a couple of classes here and there, but as film and photography studies blossomed, so did we."

Fiscally, Pittsburgh Filmmakers is downright robust. Earned income for 1995 amounted to $1,013,300, the harvest of diverse cash generators: rentals, exhibitions, membership, and, the cornerstone of its success, student enrollment.

Once spread out over several blocks in four different buildings, Pittsburgh Filmmakers has

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just consolidated and upgraded its facilities in a spanking new 20,000 square-foot space, with a parking lot to boot. The relocation last December was made possible by a number of one-time donations from private Pittsburgh foundations.

"We have a very large amount of local support," Humphrey says. "Historically, being a prosperous steel town, Pittsburgh has had a strong philanthropic base. Even today, relative to the size of the city, [local philanthropy] is still quite strong. These foundations recognize that Pittsburgh Filmmakers can make the city look good on a national level."

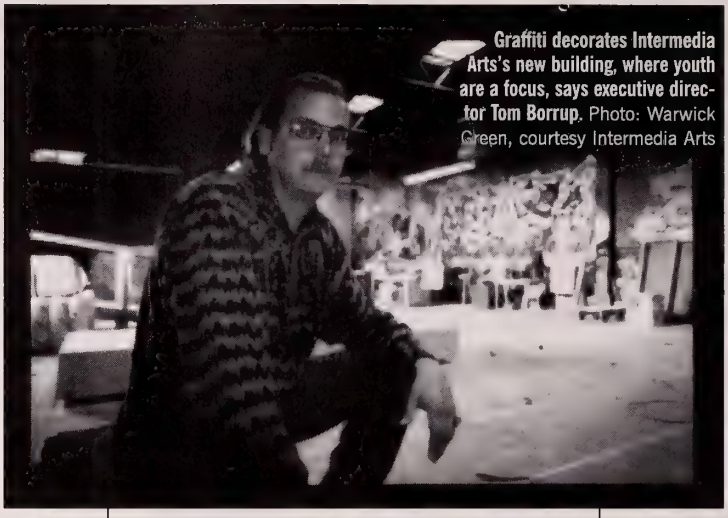
There must be something to that: the list of foundations supporting Pittsburgh Filmmakers reads like a society ball, with names like Howard Heinz, Richard King Mellon, Roy A. Hunt, and William T. Hillman among the regulars. In 1995, private funding totaled $81,485. In attracting this support, the organization's affiliation with local universities is a major factor. "There's no doubt that foundations respect our reputation with the schools," Humphrey says.

The renovated warehouse that now serves as Pittsburgh Filmmakers's headquarters was the offering of a well-heeled local real-estate developer and film buff (whose mansion, according to Humphrey, boasts its own 16mm theater). The organization rents the space at a low price, with an exclusive option to buy. Raising the money to do so, says Humphrey, is the next plan in the works.

The state of Pennsylvania is also blessed with an arts council that has a generous and forward-looking administration. The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts's grant to Pittsburgh Filmmakers amounted to $75,000 last year. Combined with the NEA's $19,500, it contributed to the approximately 15 percent of the center's operating budget that is derived from contributed income.

"The NEA funds were not cut for operations," Humphrey says, "although [this income] has been declining steadily over the last few years. What they did eliminate was the $60,000 for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Media Arts Fellowship program, which we administer." (This program still continues on a Pennsylvania-only basis, with PCA money. See story p. 7.)

Pittsburgh Filmmakers is an object lesson in maximizing good fortune. Blessed with an environment that includes numerous schools and universities, private foundations, and a supportive state arts council, this media center has made the most of it, thanks to their own sound planning and synergistic thinking.



Graffiti decorates Intermedia Arts's new building, where youth are a focus, says executive director Tom Borrup. Photo: Warwick Green, courtesy Intermedia Arts

Getting the Goods

Public funding for media arts centers is getting as tight as the puckered lips of a conservative naysayer. It seems the organizations that will survive the nineties are those that can recognize and exploit their own strengths, take advantage of the local climate (e.g., Is it foundation rich? Is it dying for training in new media?), and be willing to evolve.

DCTV has invested in the newest technology and alliances with manufacturers; Third World Newsreel has formed a strong brain trust and is exploiting its unique film and video collection; Pittsburgh Filmmakers has solidified ties with the major educational and financial players in its area and owns prime exhibition venues.

What follows are a few more brief examples of media arts centers that are changing with the times and positioning themselves for life beyond the year 2000.

Bay City Rollers

The Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC) is a lemonade-from-lemons kind of organization. When the public well began to dry up, says BAVC director of research and development Luke Hones, "We began to develop greater earned income potential....We took the hand we were dealt and tried focusing on what we do best."

What BAVC does best is train people in hi-tech digital and electronic media. When they noticed many of their program graduates getting jobs with major manufacturers like Avid, Apple, ACOM, and Quantel, they approached these and other corporations and sold them on BAVC's reputation as a breeding ground for future industry professionals. The companies saw the light and set about helping BAVC upgrade their equipment.

"We have complementary needs," Hones says. "Most commercial facilities in the Bay Area use freelance editors, so the decisions about what equipment to buy are based on the preference of this pool of freelancers." If an editor has acquired proficiency on an Avid or ACOM at BAVC, for instance, they're likely to recommend it as professionals.

Earned income came to $700,000 last year, according to Hones. "That's about 70 percent of our [total] income."

BAVC keeps its antennae tuned to new prospects. Their foray into video preservation proved to be a substantial earner. "We saw a real need for updating formats of old video works," Hones says. "And we had the right skills and equipment."

BAVC has also developed programs for closed-captioning and descriptive media for the blind. "These special communities are a whole other audience," Hones says. Similarly, BAVC forged links to two major dance organizations in the area, Theater Artaud and World Arts West. "We're trying to develop markets for high quality video recording of dance performances," Hones says, with the sensible rationale that making them look good on tape "helps them get their grants."

911 Is No Joke

"There's an incredible multimedia interest in Seattle," effuses Karen Hirsch, executive director of 911, the sole nonprofit media arts center in the land of Microsoft. As a result, 911 has shifted its focus to include the needs of this eager constituency. The old, unused Steenbeck that Hirsch was reluctant to toss is now gone, making room for new video postproduction equipment. "I would encourage any media art center to begin adding digital media to their roster, however they can, even if it's only at the level of software," she says.

In a stroke of genius, 911 arranged for one of its members to purchase an entire editing suite and split the rental revenue with the center. "This way," Hirsch says, "we didn't have to lay out $15,000 for equipment." Other members are now considering similar deals.

A $40,000 grant from the King County Cultural Resources Division in 1994 boosted 911 into PowerMac 9500 territory, complete with Premiere software. Hirsch says the PowerMac station will eventually turn a pretty penny in constant rentals.

Overall, earned income last year added up to $190,000, or 65 percent of the total operating budget. Hirsch expects that figure to increase to $226,000 in 1996.

Though Seattle is "millionaire country," according to Hirsch, she admits 911 has lagged in identifying private donors. "A couple of family foundations give us small amounts, but that's not enough. More of these people might give us money if they knew we were here. That's a big part of our strategy: greater visibility." To this end, 911 has mounted a well-received lecture series at the University of Washington, "Creating Cyberculture."

To further wean itself from public money, 911 has launched a corporate membership program. "Last year a whole bunch of companies were sending their employees here for training," Hirsch says, "so we decided to innovate with this program." Among 911's new users are the Federal Aviation Administration, which signed on for an eight-week video session, and Adobe. Companies like Adobe are often staffed with people fluent only in digital language; video is a skill they must learn to develop multimedia products.

"As part of the national downsizing trend, companies want to educate their staff rather than hire outsiders," Hirsch says. "That kind of training is a priority for us."

A Community Affair

Intermedia Arts recently relocated to a South Minneapolis neighborhood, and within days the building was covered with graffiti. Proof of urban decay? Hardly.

"We got together the graffiti artists in the neighborhood and let them loose on the new building," says Tom Borrup, the center's director. "It looks great." The move from a university to a residential area has allowed Intermedia Arts to develop links with younger kids. "Youth is definitely our focus," Borrup says. "We engage in a lot of partnerships with high schools and alternative schools. When Film in the Cities [a prominent Minneapolis media center] went out of business, we felt we needed to fill the hole in youth programs that was left."

One interesting grant for $60,000 came from the U.S. Department of Education last year. Earmarked by the government for "crime prevention," it included a theater/performance workshop for underprivileged youth. The program was a huge success and led to the founding of a professional theater group.

"We have a budget of just under $1 million a year," Borrup says. "Less than 10 percent is earned income." Fortunately, "The Twin Cities have a reputation for philanthropy." Local support comes from Minnesota's McKnight Foundation ($160,000 in 1995), the Dayton-Hudson department store, and St. Paul Co., an insurance firm. "They have an interest in supporting diversity and cultural programming, which is what we do," Borrup says. This income is supplemented by funding from the NEA ($25,000 this year, down from $75,000 in 1995) and the Minnesota State Arts Board.

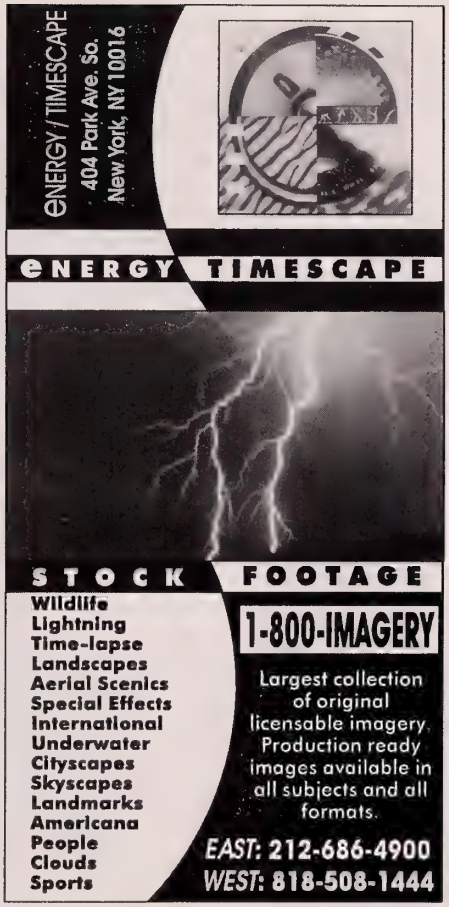
"We've tried to develop earned income projects in the past, but we jettisoned some of them because they lose money and, more importantly, detract us from our main goals." One such ill-fated enterprise was a tape distribution program. "It brought in $40,000 a year," Borrup says, "but cost double that to run. And it really wasn't part of our focus."

Nonetheless, earned income is something Intermedia Arts is hoping to increase. "With the new building—which is a great space in a great location with lots of parking—a lot of opportunities have opened up," Borrup says. That potential includes a café, expanded equipment rentals, and the rental of office space. It also allows for screenings and exhibitions produced in partnership with area organizations like the Latino arts group CreArte, the Walker Art Center, and Intermedia Arts's new co-tenant, the Center for Arts Criticism, headed by Beni Matias, former president of the board of AIVF.

Intermedia Arts has already begun phasing out video production, and Borrup expects that programs will "shrink a little bit" as grants decline somewhat next year. "But," he adds, "media arts centers have the particular skill of being able to shrink or grow to fit the times."

Mitch Albert is a shapeshifter who has metamorphosed from journalist to documentarian and back again. He is currently an aspiring practitioner of Chinese medicine.

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Stepping Out: The Art of Publicity

BY KAREN LARSEN

DOES PUBLICITY REALLY MATTER? IS IT REALLY NECESsary to seek out the media in order to get attention for your project? I would suggest that it is, and the reasons go far beyond simply attracting crowds to a particular screening. Publicity can also help you attract funders, distributors, festival programmers, and exhi-bitors; it can further your career as a filmmaker; and it can help to facilitate future projects. Publicity also can effect change or raise consciousness, as in the case of a film like *Deadly Deception*, Debra Chasnoff's Oscar-winning work on General Electric, nuclear weapons, and the environment.

Whether your film is made for theatrical release, television, home video, or educational purposes, there is little point if no one sees it. And no one will see your film if they do not know about it. Publicity generates business. I do the publicity for a number of film festivals. Every time I work on a film that achieves a good amount of publicity and attention, Landmark Theaters calls me with an offer to show the film.

In order to achieve your goals, planning for publicity should begin at the outset of the project when you are raising funds and writing grants. Start before you get caught up in scriptwriting, shooting, editing, and all their attendant problems and details. Funds should be set aside early to ensure that there will be enough in the budget for publicity. Sometimes an advance story in the newspaper can even assist in fundraising efforts. Potential investors, reps, and distributors, who are always looking for product, notice media coverage. They can help you most if they find out about your project before it is finished. Since editorial coverage in the media is free, you might as well take advantage of it.

Filmmakers should avoid the scenario where the film is finished and ready to show to the public, and they suddenly realize there are no stills and no press packet. With the screening date fast approaching, filmmakers usually do one of three things: desperately try to manage the publicity themselves, hire a publicist, or call everyone they know for advice on how to get some notice for the film.

At this late date, it is often a minor miracle if the filmmaker or even an accomplished publicist can get any attention at all. Even if one does attract attention, the coverage is not nearly as effective or thorough as it might have been had the publicity been started earlier.

A filmmaker once told me that no one had attended the opening of her film. "Was there anything in the paper?" I asked. "Nothing," she replied, "not one mention." "Which papers did you send info to?" I asked. "None of them," she replied. I asked the filmmaker how she expected her film to receive coverage if she did not inform the press. She gave a telling if somewhat naive response. "I assumed that reporters are well-informed and make it their business to find out what's happening."

Unfortunately, this attitude is more prevalent than one might think. While it is true that reporters do go after a good "news" story, this is not as likely in the entertainment section. Reviewers and feature writers depend on releases and phone calls from publicists for many of their ideas. Reaching these people requires a carefully worked-out strategy that should begin *before* the first day of shooting.



Not your usual production still: Documentary-maker Jonathan Berman (below boom) picked this flesh shot to publicize *The Shvitz (The Steambath).* All photos courtesy filmmakers

Planning Ahead

The first thing you need to do is define your goals. What audience are you trying to reach? Is your production for television, cable, home video, or the theatrical market? Should it play the film festival circuit? Do you want publicity now or later? Consider what is unique about your project. Keep in mind the fact that you will not get a long interview in your local paper both while in production and again later when the film is completed, unless there is another angle for the writer to pursue. Too much coverage during a festival can compromise your film's future, since newspapers will not run a review twice. These are just a few of the reasons for planning your coverage carefully throughout the production period. Asking these questions will aid the publicity process even if you do not know all of the answers.

During production you will need the following:

- a working title that sums up the spirit of the film;
- a written synopsis;
- biographies of crew and actors; and
- background information about the project.

A graphic image to identify your project is helpful but not absolutely necessary.

Press materials early in your project will be simple. You will add to them as you go along. Get biographies and head shots from personnel as you hire them. Begin keeping files of funding information, credits, and notes about the shooting. Learn how to write a press release that imparts the necessary information of who, what, why, where, and when. Make a time-line with realistic deadlines and above all, *TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS!*

Good Photos Beget Good Coverage

The single most important thing you must do is to have a good photographer on the set. So many filmmakers forget about stills until the film is set to open. Then they have to use frame blow-ups or scurry around to come up with something suitable. In some cases, as happened with *Visions of the Spirit*, a documentary about Alice Walker, or the several films about Jack Kerouac, we were able to overcome the lack of production stills by using photos of the subjects of the documentaries. Most of the time this simply will not work. Competition for space in the print media is fierce, and you need to have at least as good a shot as everyone else. If you have great photos, you are almost guaranteed calendar listings, providing you make deadlines.

Your photographer should take color slides and black-and-white photographs. Color slides are for "slick" magazines, posters, postcards, brochures, and some newspapers. More and more newspapers are using color. While color is more expensive, it attracts more attention and may get your story or review on the cover or the image above the masthead on the front page. Black-and-whites are for most newspapers and all other print media. There is no point in taking color prints except for your scrapbook—print sources will not use them. Do not expect to get usable black-and-whites from color slides. It may seem like a way to save money, but all too often the result is a muddy print.

Your stills should be shots of actual scenes from the film taken during production. Budget for a good photographer who knows how to shoot well-composed production stills. Ideally, the photographer would be on the set all the time in case something wonderful happens. In the interest

of economy, save the photographer for the important days when there is a big scene scheduled with the principals, a well-known person is visiting the set, or a visually gripping shot is likely to occur. Photos of the director and crew working are useful to have for trade publications, but otherwise are not that important. One last piece of advice: *Do not shoot your own stills*. Even if you are a proficient still photographer, you will not have the time to concentrate on getting the right kind of shots.

To successfully promote your film, you will need at the very least: VHS videotapes, stills, and press kits. One-sheets, postcards, and flyers are optional, although I would encourage all of them for more coverage in venues like coffee shops, bookstores, theaters, etc. An asset for television stations is to have a 3/4" or Betacam clip-reel to accompany interviews or reviews. Without clips, television coverage is unlikely. Producers' rep Peter Moore says, "Don't economize on materials, especially stills. After all, you wouldn't build a half-million dollar house and then give it a crummy paint job."

Getting Advance Press

There are things the filmmaker can do while the production is under way that will help attract coverage. If you can interest a national magazine like *Entertainment Weekly* in doing a feature on the making of your film or running an advance in a "What's New" column, this would greatly increase public awareness and create enthusiasm on a national level.

Keep production notes and assign yourself or someone else the task of getting a few local stories during shooting. These types of "local boy makes good" or "guess what's happening on Main Street" stories are especially easy to generate in a small town where news is scarce. When the stories appear, photocopy and add them to your growing press packet. Major pieces may end up in the final press packet.

While in production keep making media contacts that will prove useful later on. Remember who you talked with and keep them informed with releases and phone calls. Stay in touch with your local *Variety* correspondent and with other trade publications. The trades are sometimes interested in stories about who got a grant to make this or that project.

Design an overall look for your film while you are in production. If you do not have a bold graphic or logo, make something simple with the title of the film at the top of the page. Work on developing a style in presenting yourself and the film. This will help to identify you to the press person who gets tons of mail each day.

Presenting Your Film to the Press

If you have followed the instructions above, when the film is completed you will have the makings of a good press packet. You will have a selection of stills from which you can choose three or four to make multiple copies, and you will have other stills to give to papers and magazines that want an exclusive photo. You will also have a synopsis of the film, production notes, a full credit list of cast and crew, biographies of key actors and personnel, special credits such as music, and, if your film is a documentary, information about the person or event portrayed. You will make a few 1/2" videotapes for those who cannot attend a press screening, and 3/4" or Betacam clips for television coverage.

Stills should be labeled with the name of the film, the names of those shown, the photographer's credit, and a "please return to" with an address. Tapes should be labeled with the name of the film on the cassette and the box, as well as a "please return to." With clips, identify each briefly and give the length in minutes and seconds.

Whoever publicizes your film is your liaison to the press. This person must be at a telephone or have a machine where messages are picked up regularly—no less than twice a day. Often a newspaper writer calls in the middle of his story and needs a quick answer or stills for a deadline. Writers for the dailies, in particular, are used to a quick response. A delay could cost you the piece, which is one of the cases for hiring a professional publicist whose job is to be available to the press at all times.

If you are doing your own publicity, prepare a short spiel about your project. Be able to define quickly how your film is different from all others. Media people have a short attention span. Because they are overworked and busy, if you cannot make your point succinctly they are less likely to be interested. It is not uncommon to have a film reviewer or editor say something like, "You have exactly thirty seconds to convince me that I should cover this."

Opening a Film

When your film is about to open theatrically, you must decide whether to screen it for the press. If the print is ready and looks much better on a screen than a VCR, you will want to press-screen. A screening two weeks before the opening will allow the reviewer to make the deadlines of weekly newspapers. In order to get some earlier pieces in magazines or papers with long lead times, such as the Sunday entertainment sections of most city newspapers, you will either have an earlier screening or show the film on 1/2" videocassette to those writers. You can also show your VHS screener copy to reviewers who cannot make the press screening.

If your piece is shot on video and intended for television, you might decide to play it theatrically to garner interest and publicity. If your goal is to attract PBS and/or video sales, then show the work on a large screen at a local theater. This might generate a Sunday piece in the newspaper and reviews in the dailies and weeklies. With these tearsheets in hand, you can try to convince PBS to air your tape. When the video later plays on PBS, it will be reviewed in the same papers, this time by the television reviewers. George Csicsery opened *Where the Heart Roams* to a lot of attention from the media and used that coverage to get a distributor. Your goals might be different; the important thing is to define them, then strategize from there.

The more available a filmmaker and/or actors can make themselves for promotion of a film, the better. It is relatively easy to arrange radio interviews with directors, screenwriters, actors, etc., and it is free publicity. The same applies to print media. Be sure to have a photograph of anyone being interviewed, because quite often newspapers ask for one. Photos can be hard to find at the last minute. It is always a plus for coverage if the filmmakers can be present on opening night, adding that special touch to the festivities.

Another option is to hold a press conference. If you have a film like *Houses Full of Smoke*, about U.S. covert operations in Central America, and former spy Philip Agee is in town, holding a press conference will attract more attention to the film. You should only hold a press conference if it is news. Rama Wiener of Tara Releasing scheduled the New York opening of Connie Field and Marilyn Mulford's civil rights documentary *Freedom on My Mind* during the reunion of the summer volunteers in Mississippi exactly 30 years after the murders of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney. This helped Wiener secure feature news stories in addition to reviews and interviews with the filmmakers.

To Hire or Not to Hire

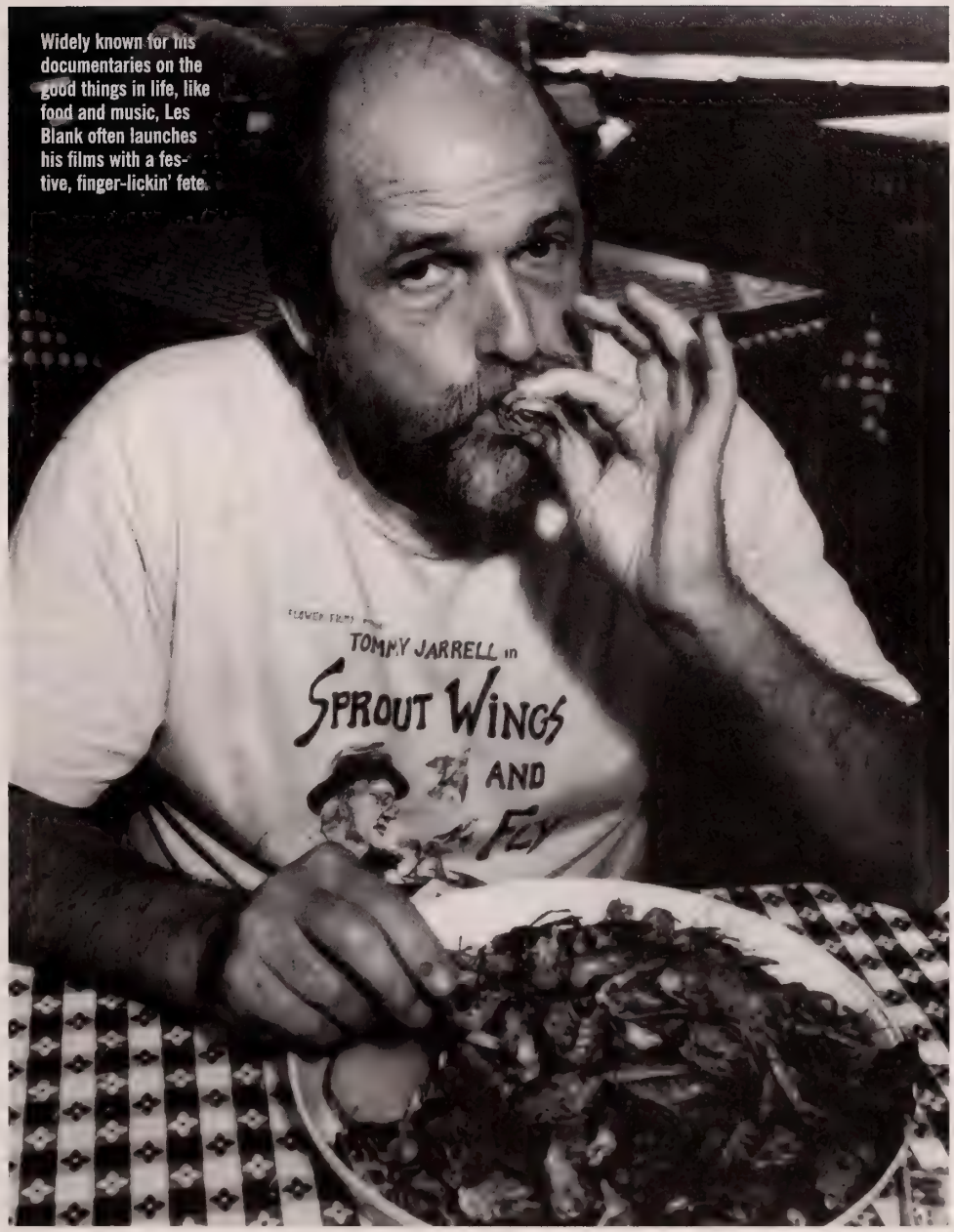
What are the pros and cons of actually hiring a publicist for your project? What a publicist can do, how you work with one, and how much it costs are some of the areas to explore. A publicist can advise you at the strategy stage and work with you on your publicity plan. A publicist knows deadlines and has media contacts you do not have. You can discuss with your publicist whether to play in a festival or open theatrically, whether to try for a PBS airing or the educational market. The publicist can also discuss strategy for promotional tie-ins such as T-shirts, postcards, stickers, buttons, flyers, and radio ticket giveaways. A publicist can help point out that special cost-effective item that can attract attention. For example, Tara Releasing's *The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb* made glow-in-the-dark spider rings for audience giveaways. The rings cost only a penny each!

Doing publicity means wading through an enormous number of functionaries—editors, producers, public affairs directors, calendar editors, feature writers, television and film critics, radio disc jockeys, reporters, and freelancers. The publicist can answer questions concerning who should be contacted and when, who is on vacation, who just did a similar story, what materials should be sent, when screenings should be scheduled and releases sent out.

Publicists talk to other publicists and often this leads to new ideas. For instance, I was opening Daniel Bergman's *Sunday's Children* in San Francisco. He was not available for interviews so I called Kahn and Jacobs who had handled the film in New York. They suggested several writers who had conducted interviews with Bergman but had not placed them. One of these worked out and resulted in a Sunday interview piece.

A publicist can talk about a film in ways the filmmaker might find difficult. Often it is hard for a filmmaker to sing his or her own praises, but the publicist can get away with it. Facts must be accurate and well-documented, phone calls must be returned promptly, and one must have a pleasant manner. The publicist works with this in mind.

Coverage usually depends on newsworthiness, interest, timeliness, and human interest. It is the publicist's job to convince the proper person, without belaboring the point, that his story fulfills some of these requirements. Publicists are not necessarily treated gently by the press, but if materials are presented well and have something pertinent to say, and the publicist is polite, punctual, and tenacious, publicity will result. If you decide to hire one, do so in enough time that they will be able to make deadlines. Ideally, a publicist would be on board *four months before the first showing*, thereby leaving enough time to get a story into the national magazines. Hiring the publicist at the beginning of the production would be even better. The publicist could function as a consultant during production and be hired later to open the film.



Widely known for his documentaries on the good things in life, like food and music, Les Blank often launches his films with a festive, finger-lickin' fete.

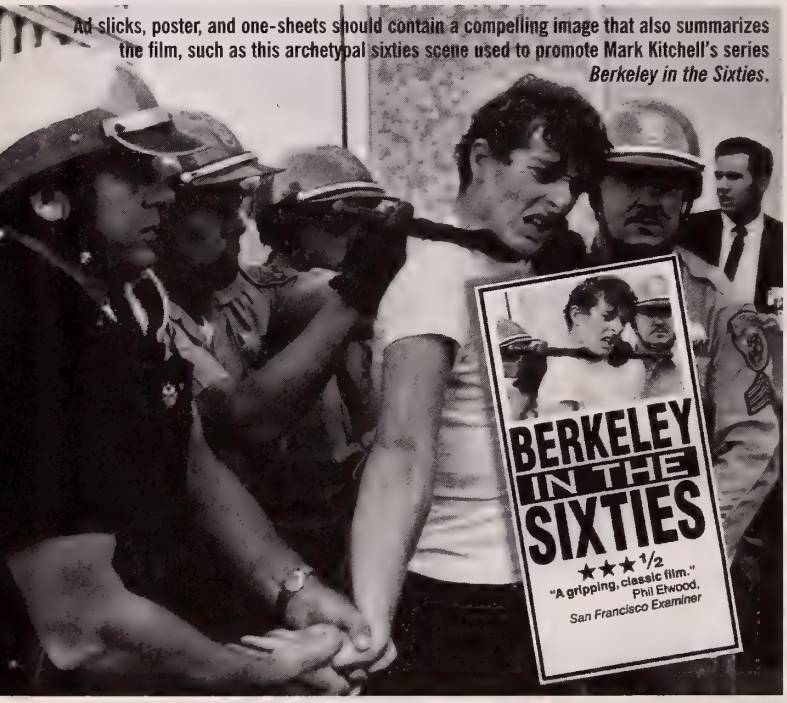
How do you know whom to hire? Ask other filmmakers whom they recommend. Look in the papers, notice campaigns that seem to be working and find out who is doing the publicity. Ask local film organizations. Ask reviewers who they like to work with. Interview all of those recommended and find out their rates. Ask publicists what they would do for you and determine their interest and availability. It would be better to hire a person with experience who cares about your project even though he/she charges a bit more, than to hire an inexperienced person who would work for less money and probably get less coverage.

One solution for those on tighter budgets is to hire an experienced publicist as a consultant and have a less experienced person act as an assistant making press kits, stuffing envelopes, and even calling press people. Recently Lynn Hershmann-Leeson paid me a consulting fee to meet with her assistant and walk him through the writing and placing of a press release about an award she won. I went over the release, made some suggestions, and basically told him who to send it to and how to follow up.

Several weeks later I was delighted to see a news story about the award in our daily paper. Filmmakers can save money by writing their own press materials, putting together the press packet, labeling stills and tapes, stuffing press releases, and buying supplies. Then you can hire the publicist to set up screenings and interviews and get major stories.

All publicists have their own styles. The bottom line is that you must like the person you choose and feel that he/she is the best person for the job. Remember that the publicist is working for you. If you are unhappy with some aspect of the publicist's work, do not go along with it. Lizzie Borden told me that one of the regional publicists working on *Working Girls* used stills that Borden did not like. I told her that she didn't have to accept that, and when I worked on the film in San Francisco we used the stills Borden picked herself.

Even if your film has a distributor who hires a publicist, call that person and discuss your ideas about how to present the film. You will both feel better afterwards. In the event your film is in a festival, I recommend calling the festival's publicist, introducing yourself and making sure they know your goals and also that they have all the stills and written materials they need. If the film is scheduled for television, I would not leave anything to chance. Again, call the publicist and ask if there is anything you can do to help. Naturally, if you are polite and helpful you will get more attention from that publicist, who is likely handling a lot of other projects at the same time. If you do decide to hire someone, you need to be aware of what they are doing and how they are doing it. The relationship between you and your publicist is extremely important.



Ad slicks, poster, and one-sheets should contain a compelling image that also summarizes the film, such as this archetypal sixties scene used to promote Mark Kitchell's series *Berkeley in the Sixties*.

If you decide not to use a publicist, you must build your own contacts with the press. Start by going to the library or to film organizations. Many of them have lists of media people, their areas of interest, and their deadlines. In San Francisco, KNBR radio publishes a list of radio and TV stations with names of personnel at each station and information such as what length PSAs they air. Carefully scan every publication you find. If it covers film and video, put it on your press list. Listen to the radio, watch TV, and notice who is doing what. Ask people you know who they think might cover your story. Out of all this you will begin to have a personalized list for your project. Remember to include reviewers, editors, calendar people, feature writers, freelancers, television and radio personnel.

To ensure a successful opening you must do outreach to the communities that have an interest in your project. Marc Huestis' *Sex Is....* and Arthur Dong's *Coming Out Under Fire* must be reviewed in the gay papers. *Saviors of the Forest* by Santa Cruz's Camera Guys should be written up in the *Sierra Club Bulletin*; Yale Strom's *The Last Klezmer* must be reviewed in *The Jewish Bulletin*; information about Barry Minott's *Harry Bridges* should be sent to labor journals. You must be creative if you want the widest possible audience to see your film.

When I worked on *Black to the Promised Land*, I enlisted the help of the education coordinator for the San Francisco Film Society, Robert Dunn. He worked with me on reaching teachers and students. We set up a special screening for several classrooms, invited the press to participate, and from that garnered additional news coverage on radio and television and a feature story in *The Jewish Bulletin*. If you see a story about a topic similar to yours, call the writer. Be prepared to explain how your project is different and how it is alike. Be consistent, make deadlines, be succinct, and be available to the press by phone or message machine. Don't take anything for granted even if the reviewer is your best friend. Keep in mind that the reviewer has an editor who must also be convinced to run the story.

Budgeting for Publicity

Money for publicity should be included in the budget at the fundraising stage. By the time the project is completed often there is no money left for publicity. I encourage you to put a certain amount of money under lock and key until the right moment. Early planning can also save costs. Anticipating needs for packets and stills means that money can be saved by copying large quantities of these materials as well as posters, postcards, stationery, and envelopes. Other expenses to consider are flyers, postage, phone calls, messenger services, and tape duplication.

In 1993 and 1994 Irving Saraf and Allie Light's very successful *Dialogues with Madwomen* played in 40 cities, 35 festivals, and on PBS (*P.O.V.*). They spent $16,583 for the national publicity effort. Here is a breakdown of the expenses:

Posters (full size & color, design, separations & printing)	$4,489
Press kits	339
Publicity photos	782
Flyers (4 different kinds)	438
VHS viewing cassettes	818
Ads (design and litho reproduction)	295
35-mm theatrical trailer (15 copies)	3,702
Preview room rental	175
TV spots	90
Publicist's services	5,455
Total	$16,583

Saraf told me that all of the expenses were important. He and Light used 550 posters and were greeted by them in festivals all over the world. They still have an occasional use for them. In Saraf's opinion, 35mm theatrical trailers are the cheapest form of advertising and filmmakers should definitely make them. Saraf adds that you should order at least 100 viewing cassettes to start with, maybe even 200, and that you should

not expect to get them back. (I disagree; if you label cassettes as I suggested, you should get some of them back.)

Irving's figures do not include advertising costs that were deducted by theaters from the producer's share, telephone calls, shipping, festival expenses, and cost of film prints. Telephone and shipping expenses were buried in the costs of distribution. Also, they saved money by editing their own theatrical trailer and TV spots, and designing and producing the press kits.

I handled the publicity for *Dialogues with Madwomen* in San Francisco, beginning with a sold-out benefit at the 1,500 seat Castro Theater for the San Francisco Women's Building, theatrical engagements at the Castro and UC Theaters, and at the Nuart Theater in Los Angeles. The film was a huge success partly because of the very careful strategy on the part of the filmmakers all the way along. After the openings in San Francisco and Los Angeles, Sande Zeig booked the film across the country and Lawrence Helman and Marc Huestis of Outsider Productions handled publicity duties.

Tara Releasing's Rama Wiener echoes the need for the materials that Saraf lists above. In the interest of keeping costs down, she feels it is important to invest the money for a lot of materials early to avoid costly reorders later. Tara always prints full-size posters. For *Freedom on My Mind*, where a four-color poster seemed unnecessary, they printed 2,000 posters in black-and-white with red for $2,000. Another poster option is to make blueprints from a full-sized film positive. The film costs about $50 and the blueprints are about $3 each (there is no minimum order, and our office gets a price break by doing the labor). As 8" x 10" black-and-white stills cost approximately one dollar apiece, Tara orders lithos of their publicity stills (with the captions, company name, and other pertinent information) from a lab in the Midwest in lots of 500 for $70 including tax and shipping.

Wiener believes that it also helps to create ad slicks. There is a high minimum order—200 for $85—but ad slicks can also be used to generate flyers and postcards. Postcards are inexpensive and effective advertising, especially if there is a nice image for the front. The back can have all the pertinent information and a four-star quote (if available). Cards can be customized by labels with specific theaters and playdates (hand highlighting the dates always helps). Rama also thinks that 3/4" clip reels are very important, even though they cost $40 apiece. Usually five clip reels will suffice, and you will keep the price down if you keep the time under 10 minutes. Shop around; there are bargains to be found.

The cost of a publicist varies from city to city, with New York being the highest, Los Angeles in the middle, and San Francisco and Seattle at the low end. In San Francisco, you should expect to pay about $2,500 for publicist fees and other expenses to open a film. In Los Angeles the amount doubles and in New York it triples. The cost of screening rooms in San Francisco varies from $75 to $95 an hour. In New York, rooms start at $100 per hour. Every cost is greater in New York, so if you are opening there you have to take that into consideration.

Unit publicists, who garner press for the film while it is in production, are usually paid by the week, while publicists hired to open a film are usually paid by the project—$800 to $1,200 in San Francisco. You could consider hiring a publicist as a consultant for an hourly fee of $50 to $100 per hour in San Francisco. Given an hour, a competent publicist can look over your materials and give advice as to how to target the right audience and who in the press might be interested.

The Future Is Coming

Any current discussion of publicity would be incomplete without a brief discussion on how the information superhighway and other new technologies are impacting media and the publicist's job. The ability to transfer or access information instantly on the Internet has enormous potential to make everyone's lives a lot easier and coverage a great deal more efficient. Just as faxing became commonplace in the late eighties, being on-line may well be the publicity standard as we enter the twenty-first century.

Imagine the following scenario. The editor of the largest daily newspaper calls you on deadline for tomorrow's paper and cannot find the stills you sent the previous week. You frantically search your cluttered desk for one of your production stills. You cannot find the one that would be perfect, so you send your second, or maybe even your third choice by messenger and hope for the best. Ten minutes later the paper calls to fact-check the playdates of your film. They cannot find your release, so you answer the questions and fax another release.

The time is coming when this scenario might be replaced by the following: The editor calls to discuss coverage and images. You mention that you can provide eight images in a digital (TIFF) file format sent via e-mail, in either color or black-and-white. As for those fact checkers, they will have gone to the local indie film bulletin board on the Internet where you have posted your release and press kit for the media's convenience. Your main press list will already have received the materials and any specific requests in their individual e-mail boxes.

As ideal as this all sounds, with modems and CD-ROMs replacing photos, slides, and press kits—saving dollars and trees—this reality is still several years away. According to *San Francisco Examiner* film critic Scott Rosenberg, "There's an incredible logic to the on-line approach. It's the older editors that are holding up progress." Rosenberg prefers e-mail to voice mail, and now receives some of his press releases electronically.

Although the new computer on-line technology has become a factor in conventional print media, with more and more dailies and weeklies on the Internet, it is still essential for the independent filmmaker to provide press materials in the current conventional standards. According to San Francisco publicist Jeff Diamond, some publicists are now posting releases in various on-line news groups and running ticket giveaways on bulletin boards with no appreciable response as yet.

Larger studios and some independents have provided publicists with Electronic Press Kits (EPKs) for the past several years. These kits usually include: 3/4" clips of scenes from the film; a trailer; B-roll footage of director, crew, etc.; and a music video if there is a hit song in the film with potential MTV airplay.

The time is not far off when the learning curve will disappear. As the price of equipment falls, scanners could be commonplace, modems are already a necessity, CD-ROMs will be cheaper to produce than photos, and filmmakers who are currently editing digitally will find it even easier to develop electronic press materials. Be prepared and the new technology will make your life easier. For now, make sure you make all of your snail-mail deadlines with the appropriate photos for calendar listings, and don't forget those follow-up calls!

Karen Larsen heads her own San Francisco-based public relations firm specializing in independent feature and documentary films, film festivals, and special events.

This article is reprinted from *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Film and Video*, edited by Morrie Warshawski and available through the Foundation for Independent Video and Film [see p. 10 for book orders]



SUBURBIA'S MEAN STREETS

An interview with Jim McKay and Lauren Zalaznick

ENTER *GIRLS TOWN*



BY DANA HARRIS

Girls Town is like no coming-of-age film you've seen. In the world of best friends Emma, Nikki, Patti, and Angela, sex is a given. Patti has to pick up her baby at the high school day-care center. Drugs are no big deal; a joint is saved for "after school," as if it were a cupcake in a lunchbox. But for all their modern-day nonchalance, these street-smart women still keep quiet about certain subjects. Acquaintaince rape is one of them. Tragically for one teen, that silence leads to suicide.

As the remaining trio tries to sort out their friend's life after discovering her diary and the full story of her rape, they realize the fear of speaking out could also kill them spiritually, if not mortally. As they put this knowledge into action, they begin to get a sense of their own voices and the impact they can have on their worlds.

Director/co-creator Jim McKay, who frankly describes *Girls Town* as "a feminist film," got his start shooting music videos for the likes of REM, as well as producing an award-winning series of public service announcements about such topical issues as sexual harassment, chemical pesticides, and historic preservation under the banner Direct Effect. Producer Lauren Zalaznick is fresh from her success producing Todd Haynes's *Safe* and Larry Clarke's *Kids*. While both McKay and Zalaznick have their cutting-edge chops, it's the collaborative process they used to create *Girls Town* that makes it such an extrordinary production.



McKay and his actors—Anna Grace (Emma), Bruklin Harris (Angela), Lili Taylor (Patti), and Denise Hernandez (Nikki)—share screenwriting credit, thanks to the intense improvisation workshops that shaped the script. The result is a film that's as disquieting in its subject matter as in its style, which demonstrates a razor-edge awareness. Watching *Girls Town* feels like you're inadvertently eavesdropping on these girls' lives, but it's so fascinating you can't force yourself to mind your own business.

At Sundance, *Girls Town* won the dramatic Filmmaker's Trophy and a special Jury prize for its improvisational techniques. Not long after they found out that *Girls Town* had been selected for Sundance and while they were in the midst of negotiations with October Films (which is releasing the film in August), McKay and Zalaznick met with me in a SoHo coffee shop. We talked about how they joined forces for *Girls Town*, the film's creative process, and—of course—how they managed to scrape the money together. The two have an easy rapport that leads to them completing each other's sentences, and turns an interview into a pleasure. I started things off by asking for the short-answer version of how they reached this point in their careers.

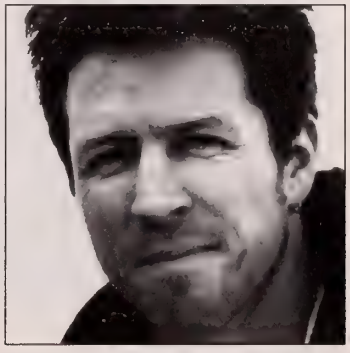
Facing page, top: Gal pals (l. to r.) Angela (Bruklin Harris), Emma (Anna Grace), Nikki (Denise Hernandez), and Patti (Lili Taylor) in *Girls Town*.

Film stills courtesy October Films. Above photos: Patricia Thomson

Lauren Zalaznick: I started out as a little person in big movies right after college. Then I got disgusted and crazy, did nothing, and, through a long, funny period of coincidences and six degrees of separation, ended up working with [producer] Christine Vachon on *Poison*. I'll just give you the punchline: at lunch one day, Christine and I were dancing around the fact that she had way too much to do and no one to do it, and I couldn't get a job in low-budget film because I'd only done big films. At the end of that lunch, she proceeded very nicely to offer to share her $200 per week salary with me, if I would production-manage while she assistant-directed the film.

***The Independent*:** Very generous.

Zalaznick: That started a long partnership of Christine and me. We did [Todd Haynes's] *Poison*, [Tom Kalin's] *Swoon*, and Todd's next short, *Dottie Gets Spanked*. That went all the way through last summer with *Safe* and *Kids*. To support myself in between low-budget films, I've always had a hand in commercials and television. I now have a full-time job at VH-1 [Creative Director and VP, On-Air Promotions]. Somewhere along the line I met Jim—actually, a really long time ago—and some years later he had this project, called me, and a mere three years later we did it.



McKay: I come out of music videos. That's what I've done for the last seven or eight years to make a living. I'd never made a narrative before this. I'm very connected to music—I played in bands and started doing videos for bands I knew. I didn't go to film school, [but] taught myself while I worked. The first thing I ever did was a documentary about eight years ago called *Lighthearted Nation*. That was on video and I shot it all myself, cut it myself, taught myself through that. I shot it in New York State and Boston and edited it over the course of three years in Georgia, D.C., and Pennsylvania—I was moving around a lot.

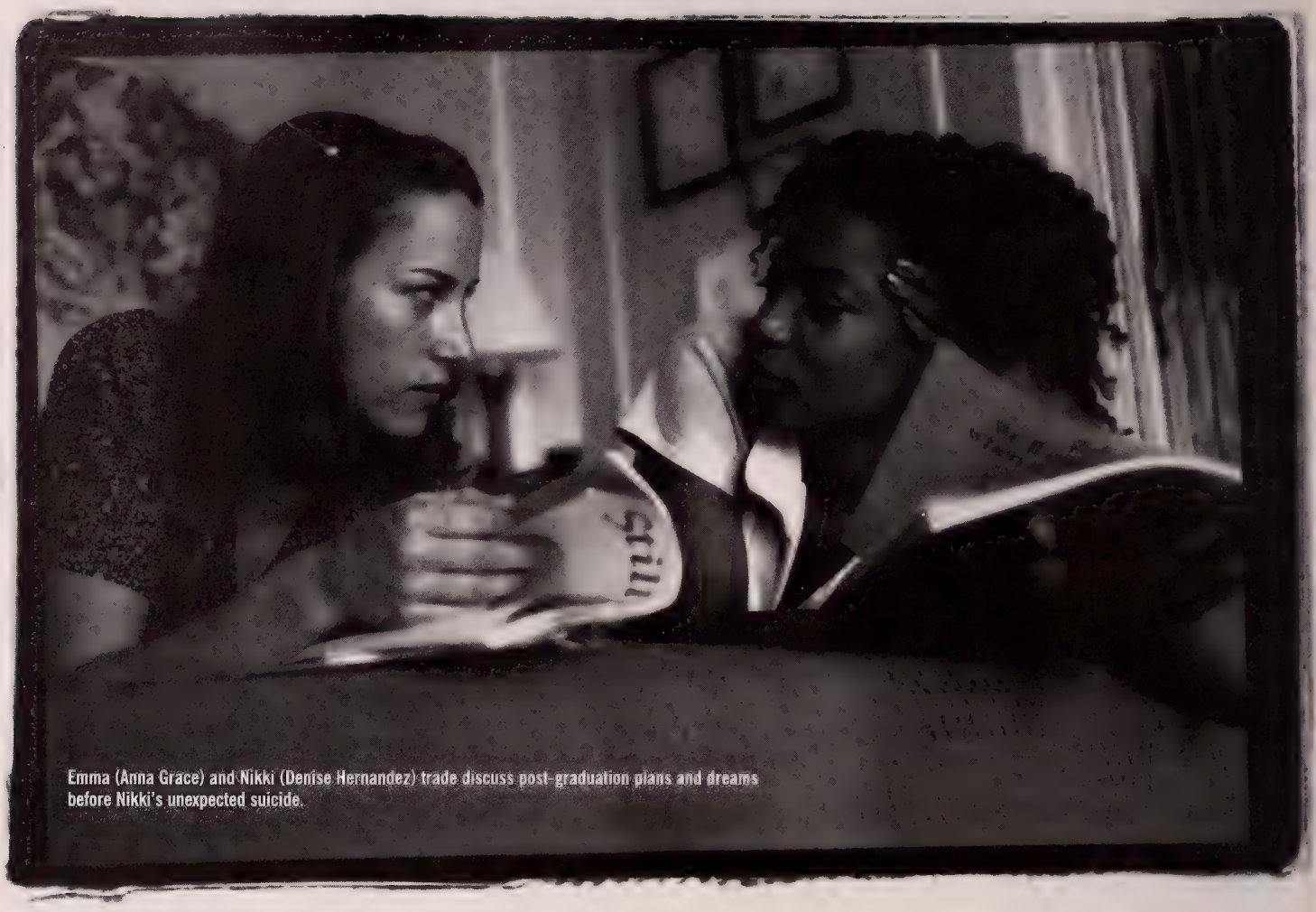
I moved back to New York three years ago and had an experience trying to raise money for a bigger movie that I was supposed to direct (*Desperation Angels*) that my friend Tom Gilroy wrote and my partner in my old film company, Michael Stipe, was going to executive produce with Oliver Stone. We looked for money for a year or more, and nothing was happening. We went through the whole [financing] thing; I really learned a lot about how to do that, which basically boiled down to "Do it yourself."

Zalaznick: You left out the whole Direct Effect thing.

McKay: Direct Effect was a series of public service announcements that I executive produced with Michael and Tom. We did 21 over the course of three or four years...

Zalaznick: Totally unsponsored.

McKay. Yeah. Kind of alternative public service announcements, I guess. That's how I met Lauren. She called because her production company had made a spot...



Emma (Anna Grace) and Nikki (Denise Hernandez) trade discuss post-graduation plans and dreams before Nikki's unexpected suicide.

Zalaznick: I forgot about that.

McKay: We compared notes. I shared what little information we had about getting on MTV and stuff like that.

Many years later I came to Lauren asking if she was interested in line-producing *Desperation Angels* if we got the money, so we made contact one more time. Finally, I realized that wasn't going to happen and I thought, "I have an idea of my own, and I want to do it this a very different way," and I went to Lauren right away. I told her I wanted someone as producer on this from the very beginning, because it's going to be a very different process and I'm going to need help.

Zalaznick: It was torturous. *Safe* was taking so long to put together. I distinctly remember having to go to our 10:30 coffee and say to Jim, "Tomorrow I have to leave for L.A. for six months [to complete *Safe*]. What are we going to do?" We were just about ready to cast.

McKay: I talked to Lili Taylor about it, because I already knew her through friends. She pretty much signed on, and yet we still cast for that part. I can't remember why we did that. Maybe we felt like she wasn't going to be able to do it because of another project, or we thought she should have another part.

Zalaznick: Both. And we were afraid that maybe having one known actor and three unknowns would be weird, and maybe we should get people who weren't actors but had experienced something similar. We went through every permutation, casting-wise.

McKay: I should back up a little here. We had a treatment and needed to workshop in order to write the script. That's what we were casting for. We did an open call for 16- to 21-year-olds and had all improv auditions, because that's what the actors were going to be expected to do. Bruklin Harris came in on one of the first calls. A lot of these people were without agents. The last day of the last open call, the last person to come in was Anna Grace. We did a series of callbacks...

Zalaznick: And had a lot of people in different groups, in different arrangements. At that point you started to give them little scenarios.

***The Independent*:** The credits read "Devised and directed by Jim McKay," and the screenwriting credit goes to the cast and you. How did that develop? Did you come to them with an idea of what you wanted a given scene to be about, and then see where they could carry it?

McKay: The treatment was very specific. It was a 24-page outline

of a story, and it said, "Scene 2. They do this and say this and this happens." But the whole point of doing it in this way was that I was open to that completely changing. And, in fact, it did. I mean, when I look at the original treatment now, the movie we made...

Zalaznick: It's a different movie.

McKay: It's nothing like [the treatment]. We spent a good week just getting ready, getting to know each other, talking about their characters, doing different exercises. It was hard because different actors work different ways. For the first half it was pretty painful at times, because we were working on the story, which could go anywhere, but at the same we were working on characters. We would stop in the middle of a scene and I would say, "What would Emma do in this circumstance? It doesn't seem like you know where to go here." And Anna would say, "I don't know what Emma would do because I don't know who Emma is yet."

Zalaznick: It was more like playacting than acting in character for a long time.

McKay: And then things blossomed and every time a new bump came up in the improv work, it oftentimes would change things that happened before. In week three, all of a sudden Lili says, "You know, I don't think I listen to heavy metal at all. I think I listen just to hip-hop." Which means we have to change this, this, and this.

***The Independent*:** It sounds like you had to have a lot of faith in the process.

McKay: Totally. And I did. I knew I was working with great people. And I had to constantly keep in mind that they were actors and not writers—and I wasn't necessarily a full-fledged writer myself. We were all working together. By having Lauren there, to reflect what we'd been doing and talk about where we were going, it was a completely collaborative thing.

Zalaznick: The actors were extremely strong actors at every step of the way, and they were also really smart people who weren't acting at certain points. They would step out of their characters and ask where the story was going. "Is it working, is it too expected, is it too unreal?" Jim really directed them, more than just being a sounding board. He had to function as a director instead of just saying, "Okay, whatever; what happens, happens."

***The Independent*:** What was your role in the process?

Zalaznick: Jim would take what had happened and bring it all to me, and I'd be the one to say, "You know, it seems kind of strange when they say this after doing this..." That's when Jim would become the actor and say, "Yeah, but that's what happened!", and I'd say, "Yeah, but it's a movie, it's got to be a story." That's how the story and dialogue got molded. We would pore for hours over which character was talking which way, and who was an interruptive character, and who was a passive character verbally but an active character action-wise...

McKay: There are so many characters "in" the film who are not in the film. We made this huge list of people that they refer to, but you never see.

Zalaznick: They all had a backstory.

McKay: We had a 200-page first draft and 400 pages of transcripts from the improvs, but by going that deep and rewriting, it allowed us to strip off all this other stuff and retain an unbelievably full life for the characters.

Zalaznick: We Charlie Brown-ized the girl's characters. We made them have no parents that you see, no adults, no siblings—but the actors knew everything. So when we reduced it to this tight, completely insular world—to throw around filmmakers' terms, it's a true slice-of-life film. It's also a true ensemble piece. There's no real star, and there's no real hero in the dramatic sense. Each character is a hero.

***The Independent*:** Was there an actual script when you started shooting?

McKay: Definitely, although there were probably six scenes or so that were improvised on the shoot, and there was a lot of stuff written in the week before the shoot. When we got everybody together to rehearse for two weeks, the rehearsal really turned into another workshop. We knew very clearly there was going to be a lot of improv on the set. We had scenes written very specifically, but there was still freedom to change lines.

We had to plan for that in how we shot it. I spent a lot of time talking with Russell [Fine, the director of photography] about how were were going to do that. The obvious solution was master shots that allowed this stuff to play out. It turned out that when we were shooting a lot of singles, a lot of coverage, the continuity was amazingly good.

***The Independent*:** What was the genesis of the project?

McKay: Of all the political labels, I find that I'm a feminist. For as little as there is out there for women, there's even less for teenage girls, teenage women. There's no legal recourse for girls being abused by boyfriends or husbands...

Zalaznick: Or fathers or teachers...

McKay: Add to that the whole psychological thing that's going on in a teenage person's life. And it's a time of life that's not shown—at all. Go to a video store, and you'll find maybe 10 videos that deal with a teenage girl's life in a real way. We're talking about a huge segment of the population.

It started out as a girl gang movie. They shared these experiences they'd had and came to the conclusion that "This is fucked up, and what are we gonna do about it?" The workshops brought the story to a more organic place, where the experience of sharing gave [the characters] the consciousness that led to spontaneous acts of retribution, not planned acts.

I think so much abuse of different sorts goes on in the world, and so little retribution happens. There are very human, real reasons why that doesn't happen, but it's an interesting question to pose: What would happen if retribution were to take place? Would that be correct or good?

***The Independent*:** Here's the question everyone always wants to know: How did you get the funding?

Zalaznick: We were going to start the long, torturous route of individual sales, foreign pre-sales, $5,000 from a relative, a friend,

whatever. I said to Jim, "I know how long this takes. And I know it doesn't make any sense, but I don't think we should wait another year to shoot the movie."

McKay: We just got tired of waiting and decided to do it ourselves. We talked about shooting in Hi8; we were that desperate to make it. We did the usual low-budget credit-card–type thing, which I'm really not interested in detailing just because it's been detailed to death.

Now that companies know people out there are able to make low-budget films for very little money, they're very happy to let them make them and buy them cheap. There's something to be said for that. I think a lot of films shouldn't be funded, probably most of them...

Zalaznick: And every single filmmaker is saying, "No, but mine is really good."

McKay: If you're really good, you'll figure [financing] out.

Zalaznick: The bottom line is no one's going to give you money, and if you don't want to waste a year of your life finding that out, do it yourself.

I think the later tragedy comes when someone's proven themselves in a first film, and the second film is no easier to fund. If a director has a wish to stay out of the studio system and in the independent world, it doesn't get any easier. There is no middle road. I understand why there are no-budget $200,000 movies, but there should be more room than there is for little movies that cost $2 million. That's what doesn't exist, from a single funder.

McKay: Throughout the making of it, tons of people chipped in their stuff.

Zalaznick: Their space, their storage space, their extra paper plates, their apartment, their fax machines. On the one hand, nobody helped us; we made this happen. On the other hand, things like this get made through the proverbial kindness of strangers. You get people who show up and work really hard every step of the way. It's the people who are outside in the cold with a clipboard who are really unbelievable.

McKay: I'm a believer in a real equality as far as crew goes. I truly believe that PAs are just as important as the gaffer. If they didn't get the gaffer's lights there, then we'd be screwed. People are really tired of working for free, but at least we had an edge in that our film was about something. It was painful like every other...

Zalaznick: Painful, nightmare, nightmare...

McKay: But it makes so little sense to complain about the drudgery of independent filmmaking. It's what it's supposed to be, and that's okay. The truth is, I'd rather make my next film exactly this way. You know, it's the unbelievable joy of this being *our* movie. There's no one telling us what to do. I wouldn't complain about it for a million bucks.

The Independent: What was your shooting schedule?

McKay: It was a 14-day shoot, but we had three half-days. It was really quick. We did 15 pages on our last day. We didn't need much rehearsal on set, and we didn't have time or money to go longer. We shot in Queens, mostly, and a couple of days in New Jersey. The film got a little more citied-out than I originally intended. I wanted the film to be Anytown, USA...

Zalaznick: Now it's Anycity, USA.

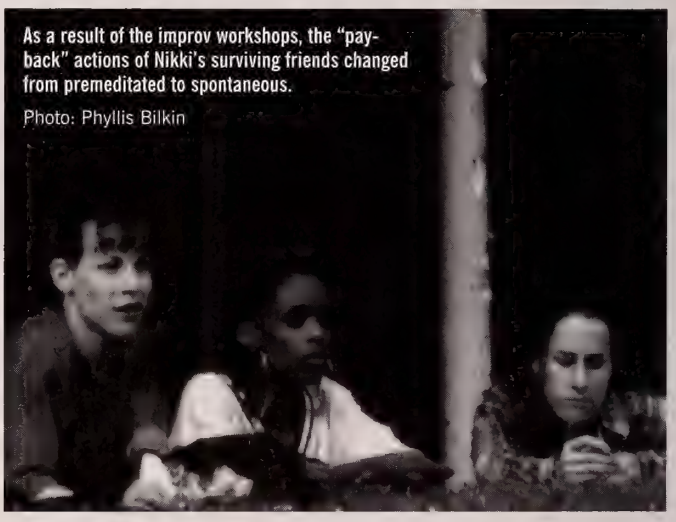
McKay: It's funny, older white people who see it say, "Oh, it's an inner-city movie." And younger kids see it as suburban.

The Independent: How much pressure did you feel about getting into Sundance?

McKay: A lot.

Zalaznick: I truly believe that films break in the place that they're meant to break. And if you don't get into Sundance, it's Berlin. If it's not Berlin, it's South by Southwest. It's nice when it happens, but it doesn't matter.

McKay: Independent filmmakers have to recognize that getting



As a result of the improv workshops, the "payback" actions of Nikki's surviving friends changed from premeditated to spontaneous.
Photo: Phyllis Bilkin

a big distributor isn't necessarily your end goal. You may wind up self-distributing or going with one of the smaller distributors. You may have to play just as big a part in getting it seen as you did in making it.

The Independent: Do you have another film in the works?

McKay: We didn't make this film so we could make another, bigger one; we made it because we really wanted to. We plan to spend a lot of time with this film, going to schools with it, going to women's groups, and then we'll be ready to make another one, probably very much in the same way. We'll be working with actors in a workshop situation.

I'm interested in exploring things that aren't necessarily me. There's a lot of realism in portraying women characters who are subservient to men, or are underconfident, but I think a lot of times portraying that vision is an excuse for a fear of going further. Where are the women who are unbelievably smart and articulate and aren't ditzes and who aren't the girlfriend and aren't the bitch and aren't the ho? I hope we see a lot more of that. I think there's a real void of politicized viewpoints. A large part of this film is about breaking the silence of these characters and giving them a voice. They're there, and they exist.

Dana Harris is a filmmaker and a regular contributor to The Independent. *She lives in Connecticut.*

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Negotiating the Nontheatrical Distribution Deal

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

"Deal-making" in the film world generally conjures up images of feature film producers hammering out contracts with distributors for a theatrical run. But film- and videomakers aiming for the educational market have to brush up on their negotiating skills, too. Although the process of securing a nontheatrical distribution deal may not seem as elaborate, producers still have to do their homework when selecting a distributor and bargaining for the best possible terms.

Regardless of whether you approach a distributor or vice versa, you should get the distributor's catalog and samples of marketing materials to develop some sense of how the company markets its work, especially projects that fall under the same general category as your film or tape. You can also see whether other titles in the distributor's library will compete with or complement your project.

Producers often find it helpful to get in touch with other filmmakers signed with a distributor to ask specific questions about current sales and marketing strategies, royalty statements, and the frequency and extent of communications between the distributor and producer. It is also useful to contact companies that have bought programs from distributors. This investigation process begins prior to discussions with potential distributors and continues throughout.

Once you have narrowed the field of candidates, distributors will send the "standard" contract, which is usually the starting point for negotiations. Although the negotiation process is not as varied or prolonged for nontheatrical as it is for theatrical films, a producer does have some bargaining flexibility when negotiating "deal points." Key deal points include (a) what media rights will be granted to the distributor, (b) what territory or territories the agreement will cover, (c) whether the agreement will be exclusive or nonexclusive, and (d) how long the agreement will last.

Producers first need to understand that the nontheatrical market comprises many venues. Your agreement should be as specific as possible and include examples when defining the term "nontheatrical" (e.g., "exhibition or use in schools, colleges, public libraries, business and industry, hospitals or other medical institutions, screening on oil tankers, military bases, aircraft or ships flying the flag or registered in the United States, its territories, or possessions"). If possible, the agreement should also define the term "educational" (e.g., closed-circuit, classroom or independent study, or use by nonprofit organizations or institutions).

When discussing which media rights will be granted, such as nontheatrical, broadcast television, or home video, the producer and distributor should state in detail the scope of rights within a particular medium. For instance, does "video" include videocassettes, laser discs, and all other audio-visual devices? Does "television" encompass commercial broadcast, public television, pay and basic cable, and direct broadcast satellite? Producers should also be aware of whether the contract grants rights to home video and other media (i.e., multimedia and interactive) to the distributor.

The agreement must also address the issue of which territories should be granted—e.g., United States, North America, Europe, worldwide. Any territories or media not expressly granted to a distributor should be deemed as reserved by the producer.

Another decision to consider is whether to enter into an exclusive or nonexclusive deal. Producers often enter into exclusive deals if the projects can be targeted successfully to a specific market, are specialized in nature, and can be marketed to conventional educational outlets—public schools, state and private universities, public libraries—which often have sufficient funds to purchase a videocassette in the $100 to $300 per half-hour range.

The term for an exclusive arrangement is approximately three to seven years and the distributor's responsibilities often include making dubs from the master (which the producer owns), coordinating marketing and promotion, billing, and the submission of royalty statements and checks to a producer on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. The fruits of the distributor's labor often will not be borne out until anywhere from 15 months to three years from the time the project first appears in a catalog, since the distributor generally pays all of the distribution costs (e.g., order fulfillment, administrative costs, promotion, and marketing), which are often incurred in the first year of the agreement.

When entering into an exclusive deal, you should make sure the distributor specifies how the project will be promoted: through the distributor's catalog, a specialized brochure, submission to festivals and markets such as the National Media Education Network, pursuit of reviews in noted industry publications, and so on. Other points that the producer and distributor should address are whether a potential purchaser can preview a project, return and refund policies, and, if relevant, details regarding an accompanying study guide.

Exclusive agreements are generally renewed on a year-to-year or multi-year basis unless

one party (usually the producer) provides written notice of termination within a specified period. You should attempt to prevent or limit automatic renewals. Instead, negotiate for a provision in which a party may terminate or not renew an agreement either "for cause" (e.g., a distributor's failure to sell a certain number of units or generate a certain amount of sales) or simply because a party wishes to.

Nonexclusive agreements usually have a one-year term, which is generally renewable automatically but can be terminated by either party upon 30 to 60 days prior written notice. Unlike exclusive deals, nonexclusive deals require the producer to keep the dubbing master, have dubs made from the lab, and provide packaging and marketing materials at his or her own expense, as well as sell copies or units of the work to multiple dealers, wholesalers, or cataloguers. These nonexclusive dealers, wholesalers, and catalogs buy tapes upfront, or when orders have to be fulfilled by them, at approximately 40 to 60 percent less than the list price. The key marketing tools in a nonexclusive arrangement are the seller's catalog and any promotional materials prepared by the producer. Nonexclusive distribution arrangements are preferable for products suitable for large, broad markets that have buyers (often consumers) who have limited funding and who are outside the conventional educational channels, such as parenting or sports.

Your agreement should be as specific as possible and include examples when defining the term "nontheatrical" (e.g., "exhibition or use in schools, colleges, public libraries, business and industry, hospitals or other medical institutions, screening on oil tankers, military bases, aircraft or ships flying the flag or registered in the United States, its territories, or possessions").

The issues of unit price and royalties will depend on whether the agreement is exclusive or nonexclusive. In an exclusive contract, the producer's royalties can range from 15 to 30 percent of the gross. However, make sure the contract spells out exactly what is meant by "net" or "gross." For certain territories or media, many distributors use subdistributors who request their own commission and even recoupment of expenses. Find out whether such subdistributors' commissions are deducted from the monies paid to you or whether they're included in the distributor's fee. Also determine which expenses are deducted before you receive your royalty monies.

In a nonexclusive deal, a producer does not receive royalties, but rather a per-unit price paid by a dealer or wholesaler (e.g., less than $100 for a 30-minute work). To figure out your profit as a producer, deduct from that amount the per-unit cost that you will incur for manufacturing, promotion, and other expenses.

Although a complete discussion of nontheatrical distribution agreements is beyond the scope of this article, there are a number of other important deal points you should address. These include:

- the nature of and maximum costs for a project's promotion and marketing;
- under what circumstance the original work will be edited, and by whom;
- who prepares and pays for master elements and prints (if any);
- the producer's right to examine the distributor's accounting books;
- which materials will be returned to the producer upon the expiration or termination of the agreement;
- the reversion of rights to the producer if the distributor is insolvent or in bankruptcy;
- the right of a distributor to assign the rights to the agreement and its obligations to third parties;
- whether an advance on sales or a minimum guaranteed payment is to be made by the distributor (which is a rare occurrence, but which may be the only money a producer will receive for a while or at all, since commissions, fees, and expenses may delay or prevent the recoupment of such monies);
- legal clearance of all music, film or video clips, performances, or other protected materials contained in the work;
- the consequences of default by any party;
- the manner in which disputes and claims will be resolved;
- who pays "Errors & Omissions" coverage.

By checking out any potential distributor, carefully reviewing any contract, and addressing these deal points, you can lay the groundwork for effective negotiation. An attorney can help spot issues not covered by such measures. However, taking the above steps first can make subsequent use of an attorney's services more efficient and cost-effective, while protecting your interests from the start.

Robert L. Seigel is a New York City–based entertainment attorney and a principal in the Cinema Film Consulting Company.

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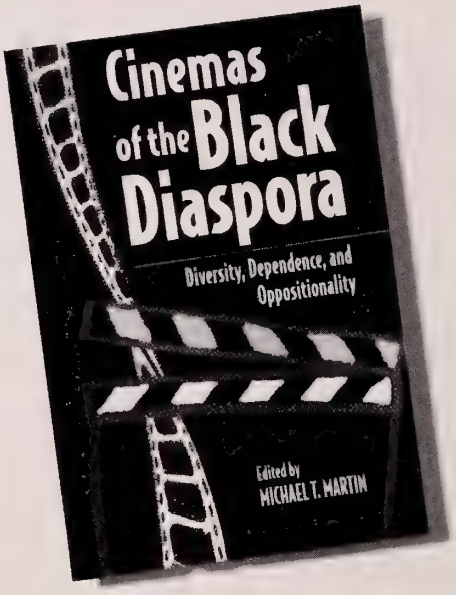
books in brief

What's New in Black American Film Studies

BY ADAM KNEE

Although as recently as 1990 there were relatively few books available on African-American filmmaking, there has now been a surge in interest and publishing on the topic. Two pioneering works on Black filmmaking and Black screen images have recently been reissued—Thomas Cripps' **Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film 1900-1942** (Oxford University Press, 1977/1993) and Donald Bogle's **Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies & Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films** (Continuum, 1973/1994)—while many new studies and first-hand accounts of African-American filmmaking have also appeared. In order to gauge what kinds of materials are available and useful, *The Independent* talked with professors from around the country in departments of communication, film, English, and African-American Studies.

Both the Bogle and Cripps books—along with Cripps's more recent **Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era** (Oxford UP, 1993)—continue to get high marks from teachers. Cripps's work is known for its in-depth, original historical research on Black involvement in the film industry, while Bogle's book offers a readable and comprehensive overview that serves well as a college text. Another overview recommended by several interviewees is Ed Guerrero's **Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film** (Temple UP, 1993). Tyrone Williams, an associate professor of English at Xavier University, recommends the text for the wide range of films it examines, both modern and historical, commercial and independent, while Jesse Rhines, an assistant professor in the Department of African and African-American Studies at Rutgers, praises its "deconstruction of the way African-Americans are imaged by whites in the film industry and how in turn these images influence the ways Blacks view and represent themselves."



Rhines is particularly interested in tracing the complex operations of "Anglo-American hegemony" in the film industry; his own forthcoming book, **Black Film/White Money** (Rutgers UP), does just this by analyzing the economics of the entry of Blacks into Hollywood. Rhines examines "how one does or does not move from being independent into being part of the Hollywood system. How and why do some Black filmmakers remain independent? Why are certain Black males getting studio financing while certain Black women, such as Julie Dash, do not receive the same kind of support?"

For a first-hand account of Black films and filmmaking by someone who has been directly involved in the industry, both Rhines and Arthur Knight, an instructor in American studies and English at William and Mary College, recommend Nelson George's **Blackface: Reflections on African-Americans and the Movies** (Harper Collins, 1994). In teaching about the African-American reception of American film, Knight also uses **The Devil Finds Work: An Essay** (Dell, 1976/1990), James Baldwin's personal memoir of movie-going experiences.

For more in-depth critical discussions of individual works and specific issues in Black filmmaking, Michele Wallace, an associate professor of English and women's studies at New York's City College and the CUNY Graduate Center and the author of **Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory** (Verso, 1990), recommends, among other texts, Manthia Diawara's anthology **Black American Cinema** (Routledge, 1993) and a posthumously published collection of essays by James Snead titled **White Screens/Black Images** (Routledge, 1994), which deals with various ways Blackness has been codified in both Hollywood film and Black independent film. For a wide-ranging theoretical approach to race in the media that synthesizes a number of differing perspectives, Wallace also recommends Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's **Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media** (Routledge, 1994). On the whole, however, Wallace is hardly sanguine about the current state of scholarship on African-American filmmaking, noting that there are many gaps and that in particular, "on topics of women, gender, and sexuality, it's pretty awful." Shari Roberts, an assistant professor of communication at Penn State University and author of the forthcoming **Seeing Stars: Spectacles of Difference in World War II Hollywood Musicals** (Duke UP), concurs, and both she and Wallace cite bell hooks' **Black Looks: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics** (South End Press, 1992) as one of the very few works that focus on issues of African-American women's sexuality.

Sheril Antonio, assistant dean for film and television at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, also suggests that despite the recent volume of scholarship in the field, substantial work remains to be done. "It's really very early for critical views on Black film," she explains. "We first need to establish a solid historical perspective." Thus far, Antonio has found the aforementioned Bogle and Diawara books, along with Bogle's **Blacks in American Films and Television: An Illustrated Encyclopedia** (Fireside, 1989) most helpful for teaching: "The Bogle books offer a useful historical survey, while the

Diawara anthology gives the students a necessary critical perspective on that history."

Wallace, who is at work on a book on race in early cinema, is likewise adamant about the need for more in-depth and rigorous approaches to African-American film history and is specifically concerned about "a sanitizing of Black history, in which what is connected to stereotypes, what is seen as unpleasant, gets set aside. The willingness to dismiss certain figures and texts is amazing."

One somewhat controversial figure who is being definitively wrested from obscurity is the pioneering African-American filmmaker and novelist Oscar Micheaux. While much of Micheaux's output of more than 40 Black-cast films, dating from the silent era, has been lost, scholars are now examining his career in detail. Jane Gaines, director of the Film and Video Program at Duke University, stresses the significance of this scholarship for "reconfiguring the canon" of texts in film studies: "Through this kind of archaeology, we are coming to realize more fully the extent of the African-American presence in the early years of film production. Now, when *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) is taught in film classes, more and more professors are also teaching Micheaux's *Within Our Gates* (1919) as a kind of response to Griffith's work." Gaines is now co-editing (with Pearl Bowser and Charles Musser) an anthology on the director's work, entitled **Oscar Micheaux and His Circle** (Smithsonian, forthcoming), and several scholars are preparing book-length studies of Micheaux as well.

Lastly, several instructors also make use of filmmaking accounts by Black directors themselves, such as Julie Dash's **Daughters of the Dust: The Making of an African American Woman's Film** (The New Press, 1992) and Spike Lee's **By Any Means Necessary: The Trials and Tribulations of the Making of Malcolm X** (with Ralph Wiley; Hyperion, 1992). In one more indication of the current growth in interest on the topic, one of the earliest and most fascinating personal accounts of Black filmmaking, Melvin Van Peebles's **The Making of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song** (1972), was reissued last year by Ann Arbor's Neo Press, with a new introduction and afterword.

Also of interest:

Daniel Bernardi, ed., **Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema** (Rutgers UP, 1996).

Jacqueline Bobo, **Black Women as Cultural Readers** (Columbia UP, 1995).

Gina Dent, ed., **Black Popular Culture: A Project by Michele Wallace** (Bay Press, 1992).

Five for Five: The Films of Spike Lee (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1991).

Krin Gabbard, ed., **Representing Jazz** (Duke UP, 1995).

Thelma Golden, ed., **Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art** (Whitney Museum/Abrams, 1994).

John Kisch and Edward Mapp, **A Separate Cinema: Fifty Years of Black Cast Posters** (Noonday, 1992).

Phyllis Rauch Klotman, ed., **Screenplays of the African American Experience** (Indiana UP, 1991).

Michael T. Martin, ed., **Cinemas of the Black Diaspora: Diversity, Dependence, and Oppositionality** (Wayne State UP, 1995).

Richard M. Merelman, **Representing Black Culture: Racial Conflict and Cultural Politics in the United States** (Routledge, 1995).

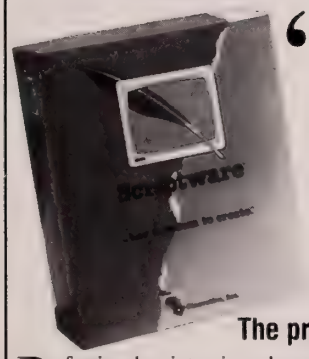
Mark A. Reid, **Redefining Black Film** (University of California Press, 1993).

Valerie Smith, ed., **Black Issues in Film and Media** (Rutgers UP, 1996).

Adam Knee is editorial assistant at The Independent.

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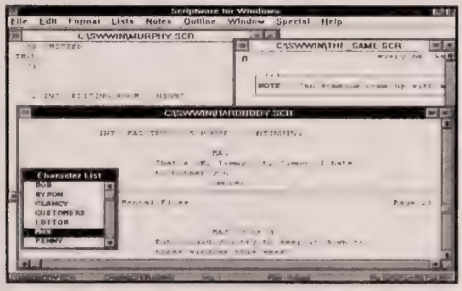
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BY KATHRYN BOWSER

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., MAY 1 FOR JULY ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED.

DOMESTIC

BLACK HARVEST INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, IL. Newly estab. in 1995, 10-day fest screens film & video. Features many directors in person for audience discussion. Sidebar events. Fest's mission is to bring contemporary & quality cinema from Black diaspora to Chicago area. Recent prods & archival restorations accepted; any films that have not previously screened in Chicago considered. Ind. African-American & African, Caribbean, Canadian & British Black films programmed. Sponsored by Film Center at School of Art Institute of Chicago as part of yr-round exhibition program of int'l cinema. Community-based program committee (incl. local Black filmmakers, critics & academics) reviews entries & makes selections. Entry fee: None. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Late May. Contact: Barbara Scharres, Film Center director, Black Harvest Int'l Film & Video Fest, Film Center at School of Art Institute of Chicago, Columbus Drive & Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3733; fax: (312) 332-5859; bschar@artic.edu.

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Aug, IL. Now in its 3rd yr, competitive film fest was organized to encourage low budget film/videomakers as well as provide venue for underground, ind. & experimental film/video outside of "entertainment mainstream," controversial, cutting edge,transgressive or politically incorrect. Awards given to best film or video in cats: best narrative or non-narrative short; best doc short; best narrative or non-narrative feature; best doc feature. Entries must be made for $1,000/min. or less of screen time & be owned by maker. George Kuchar is 1996 guest of honor. CUFF also features exhibition area for film/videomakers to sell products, fundraise or pitch projects; also presents special screenings throughout yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", S-VHS, VHS, S-8, Beta, Hi-8, pixelvision, interactive; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $25 (shorts), $35 (feature). Deadline: Mid May. Contact: Jay Bliznick, coordinator/Bryan Wendorf, press/public relations, Chicago Underground Film Fest, 2501 N. Lincoln Ave. ste 278, Chicago IL 60614; (312) 866-8660; fax: (312) 489-3468; clark@interaccess.com.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION (IDA) DOCUMENTARY AWARDS COMPETITION, October, CA. This int'l competition presents 5 Distinguished Documentary Achievement Awards of equal merit to film & video prods (4 features, 1 short) for outstanding creative excellence in doc form. Winners screened at IDA DocuFest in late Oct./early Nov. IDA also sponsors IDA/David L. Wolper Student Documentary Achievement Award Competition (deadline early June, entry fee $30) which offers $1,000 cash prize to outstanding film or video doc produced at university level. Winner & runners-up have opportunity to participate in IDA/David L. Wolper Student Documentary Achievement Reel, made available to film schools int'lly at cost. Nearly 300 entries sent to the competition annually & about 100 to IDA/David L. Wolper Student Awards Competition. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. IDA is a nonprofit org founded in 1982 to support efforts of nonfiction film- & videomakers around world, to promote doc form & expand opportunities for prod., distribution & exhibition of doc film & video. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $50 IDA members, $70 nonmembers. Deadline: Late May. Contact: IDA Awards Coordinator, IDA Documentary Awards Competition, 1551 South Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: (310) 785-9334; idf@netcom.com.

LONG BEACH INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, June, CA. Several thousand moviegoers attend fest, now in 4th yr. Held at theater facilities at Cal. State Univ. & Arts Theatre & incls premiere film showing & opening & closing night receptions, w/ many filmmakers attending. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid May. Contact: Robert Cano, director, Long Beach Int'l Gay & Lesbian Film Fest, One in Long Beach, 2017 East Fourth Street, Long Beach, CA 90814-1001; (310) 434-4455.

LONG ISLAND FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, NY. Orig, conceived in 1984 as showcase for Long Island filmmakers, fest has become regional showcase for ind. prod. features, docs, videos & short films. Held at Huntington Cinema Arts Centre, regional theatre exhibiting ind. films yr-round. Competitive fest awards in cats of Best Feature, Best Actor/Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Art Direction/Prod. Design, Best Special F/X/Make-Up, Best Screenplay, Grand Jury Prize, Producer of the Year, On-Location Award, Best of Fest Award, Audience Award, First Feature Award (drama, comedy), Best Experimental Feature, Best Animated Film, Best Short Film, Student Film (drama, experimental, doc, music video), Best Doc (work in progress, historical, series), Sales & Marketing, Student Video. Additional contact: Long Island Film/TV Foundation, P.O. Box 2157, Saint James, NY 17780. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $50-$75. Deadline: Early May. Contact: Director, Long Island Film & Video Fest, Suffolk County Motion Picture & TV Commission, Dennison Building, 11th floor, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788; (516) 853-4800.

MAINE STUDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, ME. Founded in 1977, competition is open to ME residents 19 & under. Culminates in public screening & awards presentation at Portland Museum of Art. Cats: Pre-Teen Division, grades K-6; Junior Division, grades 7-9; & Senior Division, grades 10-12. Entries must be 30 min. or shorter. In 1995, grand prize was scholarship to Int'l Film & TV Workshops in Rockport ($1,200). Other awards incl. videotapes, movie passes, etc. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8, 8mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid May. Contact: Huey, director, Maine Student Film & Video Fest, Maine Alliance of Media Arts, Box 4320, Portland, ME 04101-0520; (207) 773-1130.

MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL, November, NY. 20th anniversary of premiere fest in US for anthropological & ethnographic film & video. Each yr works programmed on different themes: themes for 1996 are works from Pacific region; invented doc & any nonfiction work looking at cultural themes in general in western & nonwestern cultures. Only nonfiction works accepted; all lengths eligible & no restrictions on premiere or date of completion. Film- & videomakers whose works are selected receive certificate of participation & pass to all fest events; some financial assistance & housing available. Est public audiences for programs over 5,000. After NY fest presentation, many titles packaged & tour to ind. film centers, museums & universities as part of Margaret Mead traveling film/video fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $75 commercial/TV, $30 ind., $15 student. Deadline: May 3. Contact: Elaine Charnov, director, Margaret Mead Film Fest, American Museum of Natural History, Department of Education, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY 10024; (212) 769-5305; fax: 5329.

MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL AND VIDEOFEST, October, CA. Invitational, noncompetitive fest screens American ind., narrative, doc, animated, short (up to 15 min.) & experimental films/videos in over 40 programs. Fest has become premiere West Coast event, w/ commitment to bringing new & innovative works to Northern CA audiences. Filmmakers, distributors, press & large local audience meet in "an atmosphere where professional relationships thrive." All genres encouraged. Fest incls around 100 programs of ind. features, docs, shorts & video works, as well as interactive exhibits, tributes, seminars & special events. Entries must have been completed w/in the previous 18 mos; industrial, promotional or instructional works not appropriate; premieres & new works emphasized. Annual audiences estimated at 35,000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, multimedia. Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Late May (early)/Late

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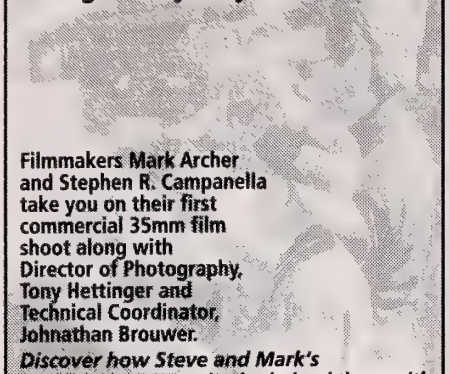
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June (final). Contact: Mark Fishkin, founder/director, Mill Valley Film Fest & Videofest, Mill Creek Plaza, 38 Miller Avenue, Ste 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256; fax: 8606; e-mail: finc@well.com.

NEW LATINO FILMMAKERS FILM COMPETITION, June, CA. Fest debuted in 1995, designed to showcase up & coming Latino student & ind. filmmakers; entries should be short narrative or doc films by Latinos or on Latino themes. Student films must have been produced under the auspices of an educational institution & ind. films must not have been produced, financed, or initiated by a major studio. Entries must have been completed w/in the previous two yrs & be under 30 min. & in English. Cash prizes awarded in narrative and doc cats to top student & ind. films. 4 films honored w/ screening at the Directors Guild of America Theatre as part of a yrly DGA Latino Committee showcasing of current Latino films & television programs in prod. as well as competition winners. The New Latino Filmmakers Association "affirms & promotes the existence of Latino film- & videomakers, producers, writers, animators & film scholars." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: $25 ind., $15 student. Deadline: Early May. Contact: director, New Latino Filmmakers Film Competition, New Latino Filmmakers Association, P.O. Box 76647, Los Angeles, CA 90076; (818) 584-1623; fax: 0450.

SINKING CREEK FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, November, TN. Founded in 1969, this is the oldest southern film fest w/ focus on ind. media, w/ long, nat'l reputation for support & encouragement of ind. work; many well-known film/video artists have premiered here. Ind. & student films & videos of all lengths eligible. $10,000 in cash awards presented. Fest incls special presentations by important media-makers & seminars in film analysis as well as area premieres, children's matinees & midnight screenings. Entries must have been completed w/in the previous 2 yrs & not submitted to previous fests. About 75 films & videos showcased each yr. Audience estimated at 3,000. Past special programs have incl African-American Issues, Women's Issues, Coming Out on Film, Films for the Environment, Animation, Cutting Edge of Experimental Film, Children's Matinees, Art on Film, Music Videos & other cultural issues. Fest held on campus of Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $25-$55. Deadline: Mid May. Contact: Meryl Truett, executive director, Sinking Creek Film & Video Fest, 402 Sarratt Student Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37240; (615) 322-4234; fax: (615) 343-8081.

UNIVERSITY FILM AND VIDEO ASSOCIATION STUDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, August, PA. Fest founded in 1993 to "survey & exhibit the very best in current student film & video worldwide." Emphasizes independence, creativity & new approaches to visual media. All entries must have been created by students enrolled in a college, university or graduate school at time of prod. & should have been completed no earlier than May of previous 2 yrs. Work may have originated in any format but must be submitted for preview on VHS. Works considered in cats of animation, doc, experimental & narrative. All works prescreened by panel of film/videomakers, teachers & curators. Finalists sent to judges. Over $6,500 in prizes awarded. Awards ceremony & fest held at annual conference of UFVA, which takes place at different location each yr. About 35 works showcased each yr. National tour of selected fest winners & finalists begins after fest at venues t.b.a. Past venues have incl. American Cinemateque (LA); Rhode Island School of Design; Films from the Margin (Boston); Stanford University; Neighborhood Film/Video Project (Philadelphia); Montana State University; American University; Jackson Hole Cultural Council. UFVA is int'l org dedicated to arts & sciences of film & video & development of motion pictures as medium of communication; publishes UFVA Int'l Fest Directory for Students. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", 8mm. Entry fee: $15, $10 UFVA members. Deadline: May 31. Contact: Dave Kluft, director, University Film & Video Association Student Film & Video Fest, Department of Radio-TV-Film, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (800) 499-8382/(215) 923-3532; fax: (215) 204-5280; ufva@vm.temple.edu; WWW: http://-thunder.ocis.temple.edu/~ddoyon.

WORLD POPULATION FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, October, MA. Secondary & college students eligible to submit works that address population growth, resource consumption, environment & common global future. Drama, animation, image-montage, docs of any length accepted in film, video & multimedia. Total of $10,000 in prizes awarded to top 3 entries in secondary & college cats. "Best of Fest '96" VHS tapes made available to secondary schools & colleges & may be broadcast on MTV, Turner & PBS. Preview on VHS. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Rawn Fulton, executive director, World Population Film/Video Fest, 46 Fox Hill Rd., Bernardston, MA 01337; (800) 638-9464; fax: (413) 648-9204; empopvidfest@aol.com.

Foreign

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July, United Kingdom. Based at Arts Cinema in center of Cambridge, fest annually presents 18 day int'l panorama of best of world cinema, retros & classic revivals. Screenings complemented by debates betw audiences & filmmakers, industry professionals & critics. Also features program of over 50 British premieres of films from Cannes, Berlin, Sundance & other int'l fests. Features (fiction, doc & animation) accepted. Over 50 short films featured at weekend event (deadline for submission of shorts is early May). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late May. Contact: Francois Ballay, director, Cambridge Int'l Film Fest, Arts Cinema, 8 Market Passage, Cambridge CB2 3PF, UK; tel: 011 44 1 223 462 666; fax: 011 44 1 223 462 555; hieran@cambarts.cityscape.co.uk.

DRAMBUIE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August, Scotland. Formerly Edinburgh Int'l Film Fest. 50th anniversary this y. will be biggest fest yet. "Fest of discovery, celebration of cinema, centre of debate, & catalyst for new directors & first films." Began in 1947 as a doc film fest & is particularly interested in nonfiction; also in any film which has not been shown in public before. Showcases about 300 new films each yr;

shows live action & animated shorts before every film in every section. In 1995 initiated Rosebud, major section of world premieres of int'l films & New British Expo, which attempts to show every British feature film made w/in previous yr. All films screened to public audiences; also screenings for press, delegates & attending guests. Awards go to Best New British Film, Best First Feature & Best Animation. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: £10-£80, depending on budget. Deadline: mid-May. Contact: Mark Cousins, director, Drambuie Edinburgh Int'l Film Fest, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ, Scotland, United Kingdom; tel: 011 44 31 228 4051; fax: 011 44 31 229 5501.

HUNGARIAN MULTICULTURAL CENTER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 20-22, Hungary. Fest accepts film, video & animated works. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: Apr. 12. Contact: Beata Szechy, Hungarian Multicultural Center, Inc., 8850 Ferguson Rd., #1114, Dallas, TX 75228; tel/fax: (214) 319-3292.

JERUSALEM FILM FESTIVAL, June, Israel. Founded in 1984, noncompetitive int'l fest shows features, shorts, docs, TV & video programs, animation, restored classics & films of Jewish interest. Israeli film competition (awarding Wolgin Dove Award of $25,000 for best feature, $10,000 for best doc & $5,000 for best short) judged by int'l jury. Also Spirit of Freedom Award ($3,000) for film dealing w/ human rights & Lipper Award for Israeli screenwriters. Addt'l sections incl. retros, tributes & special programs. Entries must not have been previously screened in Israel. Program incls over 150 films from 40 countries. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late May. Contact: Lia Van Leer, director, Jerusalem Film Fest, P.O. Box 8561, Jerusalem 91083, Israel; tel: 011 972 2 724 131; fax: 011 972 2 733 076.

KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, Czech Republic. Formerly biennial event, FIAPF-recognized competitive fest, founded in 1946, became ann'l event in 1994 & is now in 31st yr. Held at one of world's oldest & most famous spas, fest is one of largest film events in central Europe. Film competition for 35mm full length feature films is accompanied by several noncompetitive sections. Entries in competition must have been completed since Jan 1 of preceding yr & not presented in competition of any other int'l fest. Awards: Grand Prix of Crystal Globe, Special Award of Jury, Best Director Prize, Best Actor/Actress & prize awarded for life-long work. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late May. Contact: Jiri Bartosua, foundation president, Karlovy Vary International Film Fest (Mezinárodního Filmového Festivalu V Karlovych Varech), Film-Fest Karlovy Vary Foundation, Valdstejnské nám. 4, 11811 Prague 1, Czech Republic; tel: 011 42 2 5132473; fax: 011 42 2 530542.

LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August, Switzerland. Founded in 1949, this major Swiss cultural/cinematic all-feature event is known as "the smallest of the big fests & the biggest of the small," w/ reputation for innovative programming & support of alternative visions from

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FESTIVALS

ind. directors & recently founded national film industries. Unique section is series of open-air screenings in Locarno's Piazza Grande, which holds 8,000. Program, in addition to competition & Piazza Grande screenings, incls retro section, sidebar sections, new Swiss cinema & film market. Competition accepts fiction features by new directors, art films, low budget films, work from Third World countries, inds & cinema d'auteur. New section is *Leopards of Tomorrow*, short films & works from film schools around world. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Films which have won prizes at other int'l fests recognized by the FIAPF ineligible for competition & preferences for all sections will be given to world or European premieres. Educational, advertising & scientific films ineligible. Awards: Grand Prix of Fest (Golden Leopard) together w/ the Grand Prix of the City of Locarno (Sfr 30,000) to the best film in competition; the City of Locarno (Sfr 15,000); 3rd Prize (Bronze Leopard) together w/ the 3rd Prize of the City of Locarno (Sfr 10,000), 4th Prize (Bronze Leopard) & Special Prize (Bronze Leopard), to an actor or actress of exceptional merit in film in competition; Special Jury Award (Sfr 10,000). 2 reps of each film selected for competition will be fest guests for 5 days. Over 250 prods shown each yr. Covered by about 750 journalists from 30 countries. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late May. Contact: Marco Müller, director, Locarno International Film Fest (Fest Internazionale del Film di Locarno), Via della Posta 6, P.O. Box 1621, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland; tel: 011 41 93 31 02 32; fax: 011 41 93 31 74 65.

LOCARNO VIDEOART/INTERNATIONAL VIDEO & ELECTRONIC ART FESTIVAL, August, Switzerland. Founded in 1980, competitive, annual fest programs all video along w/ installations, multimedia shows, colloquia & observatory. Described as place "where artists, critics & philosophers meet to have a point to discuss the state of the evolution between arts & technologies." Competition accepts works prod. after June of preceding yr & unawarded in other fests. Competition criteria incl any work that falls under the heading "video art" where "artistic research & creativity overshadow both the technical means employed & the reference category chosen by the artist." Awards: Grand Prix del la Ville de Locarno (25,000Sfr; cash prize divided between Art Video: 10,000Sfr, & Installations: 15,000Sfr), UNESCO Award (2 grants to honor new talent), Conseille de Europe, 3 Laser d'Or Awards (to artists, theorists &/or institutions), Artronic, TV Picture, World Graph, Prix Lagomaggiore. About 60 prods showcased annually. Formats: 3/4," 1/2". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late May. Contact: Lorenzo Bianda, president, AVART, Locarno VideoArt/Int'l Video & Electronic Art Fest (Video Art Fest et Forum International des Nouvelles Images), Videoart, P.O. Box 146, CH-6604, Locarno, Switzerland; tel: 011 41 93 31 22 08; fax: 011 41 93 31 22 08.

MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July, Russia. Founded in 1959, fest incls competition of not more than 18 feature length films presenting wide range of modern world film prod.; out of competition screenings (Panorama); retros

& tributes. Organized by Moscow government, Russian State Committee for the Cinema & Union of Filmmakers of Russia. In 1995, fest received a $12 million grant from the Russian government to revamp event, w/ $3 million to be spent refurbishing local cinemas. Only feature films completed after Jan 1 of preceding yr & unscreened in competitive section of other int'l fests eligible for competition. Awards: Main Prize ($50,000 & sculpture of St. George, symbol of the City of Moscow); Special Jury Prize ($20,000); Best Director ($20,000); Best Actor ($20,000); Best Actress ($20,000); each film shown at fest receives Diploma of Participation. Bolshoi Theater is site of fest's opening & closing ceremonies; outdoor celebrations held in Red Square & Moscow parks. Fest also sponsors film market & now has modern press center. New motto is *Beauty Saves the World* (from Dostoyevsky). Formats: 70mm, 35mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid May. Contact: Alexandre Alanesyan, general director, Moscow International Film Fest, Interfest, Khokhlovsky Per., 10/1, Moscow 109028, Russia; tel: 011 95 917 2486; fax: 011 95 916 0107.

MYSTFEST INTERNATIONAL MYSTERY FILM FESTIVAL, June, Italy. Founded in 1979, MystFest is competitive int'l fest of mystery, crime & detective films, recognized by FIAPF, associated w/ Federfestival A.G.I.S, promoted by municipal authorities of Cattolica & organized by its Centro Culturale Polivalente. Program incls competition for feature films, information section, video section, retros, seminars & debates. All entries must be previously unreleased in Italy & unawarded in other int'l competitive events. Fest has inaugurated a $10,000 prize to director of the best 1st or 2nd feature film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late May. Contact: (Dott.) Marcello Di Bella, direttore servizi culturali, MystFest International Mystery Film Fest (Fest Internazional del Giallo e del Mistero), Centro Culturale Polivalente, Piazza della Repubblica, 31, 47033 Cattolica, Italy; tel: 011 39 541 967 802; fax: 011 39 541 967 803.

PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, Czech Republic. In 2nd yr, this FIAPF-sanctioned competitive fest is now among top accredited fests. Over 100 films will be showcased over 9 days. Int'l Competition & noncompetitive Panorama of World Cinema are open to films of all countries. Entries for Int'l Competition must be feature-length, not doc. & not previously screened at any other int'l competition whatsoever. Awards, known as Golden Golems, are: Grand Prize for best film, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress & Jury Prize. Entries for Panorama selection must be features produced in last yr or 2, any subject & style ("we favor live-action fiction, but a great animated film or doc. can be incl."). Other fest sections: National Cinema, focusing on different country each yr (this yr on Polish cinema), Czech cinema of last yr & 1 or 2 other retrospectives. Entry fee: None. Formats: 35mm. Must send VHS tape (1/2", 3/4"; PAL or NTSC) w/ entry form. Deadline: April 5. US contact for entry & more info: Stephanie Beroos (212) 749-4394. Or contact Prague Int'l Film Fest, c/o Bohemia Promotion a.s., V Haji 15, 170 00 Praha 7, Czech Republic; tel: 001 42 2 66795421 3 or 001 42 2 66795401; fax: 001 42 2 66795405 or 001 42 2 66795400.

QUEBEC INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FILM FESTIVAL, October, Canada. Founded in 1990, fest is one of largest int'l scientific film events, selecting about 70 films for its int'l program & 23 for competition. Strongly connected to network of scientific film fests throughout the world & offers producers/directors opportunity to make their work known to organizers of other fests & foreign specialists attending. Competition offers awards in 10 cats: film for young people; science/nature (wildlife resources); environment; film of scientific research; Québec film or video; scientific popularization; francophone film; excellence in film or TV; scientific excellence & Nortel Grand Prize. Fest also offers public screenings in Québec City & Montréal, special evenings w/ int'ly acclaimed lecturers, programming for young people & fest on tour & video library of science films. Entries must have been completed after Jan 1 of the preceding 2 yrs. Formats: 16mm, 3/4," Beta. Entry fee: $100 Can. Deadline: Mid May. Contact: Hervé Fischer, executive director, Quebec International Science Film Fest (Fest International du Film Scientifique du Quebec), 15, de la Commune Ouest, Montréal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 2C6; tel: (514) 849-1612; fax: (514) 982-0064.

SÃO PAOLO INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, August, Brazil. Founded in 1990, noncompetitive fest quickly established itself as important part of the int'l shorts fest scene. Aims to exhibit short films produced in Brazil, present Latin America's unknown prods, allow for greater access to best int'l short films of past & present & continue to

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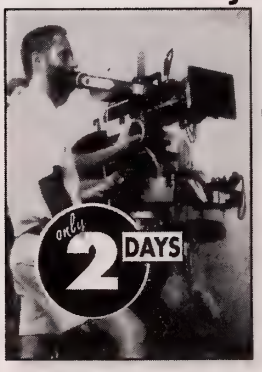
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TAM-TAM VIDEO, TV AND THIRD WORLD COMPETITION, November, Italy. Founded in 1987 & int'l competition for media produced in South (Latin American, Africa, Asia) of world & materials produced in North about South. Cats incl. fiction, doc, animation & videoclip; top awards in each cat are $1,500. Entries must be under 60 min. Fest provides accommodations & meals for media-makers selected. Formats: Betacam SP; preview on VHS. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid May. Contact: Massimo Del Carpio, director, Tam-Tam Video, TV & Third World Competition (Giornalismo Televisivo e Terzo Mondo) CIES, Via Palermo, 36, 00184 Rome, Italy; tel: 011 39 6 482 0464; fax: 011 39 6 486419; c.ies@agora.stm.it.

VELDEN AMATEUR FILM FESTIVAL OF NATIONS, June, Austria. Held in Ebensee am Traunsee in center of Austria, fest invites non-commercial films & videos. No restriction on topics. Entries must have been completed in preceding 2 yrs & be under 30 min. Jury picks entries; however, any filmmaker present at fest has right to enter his/her prod. in competition. Makers may also participate in jury deliberations on their prods. Awards: Gold & Silver Ebenseer Bear; Austrian Science & Art Minister Prize (AS10,000); special award for best film of the competition (winner receives invitation for free participation in next edition); special award for Best Experimental Film; UNICA-Medaille; cups & certificates. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2," super 8, 8mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early May. Contact: Erich Reiss, director, Velden Amateur Film Fest of Nations (Filmfestival der Nationen), Europaisches Videoarchiv, Gaumbergstrasse 82, A-4060 Linz, Austria; tel: 011 43 732 67 36 93; fax: 011 43 732 67 36 93.

ERRATA

THE YAMAGATA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, October, Japan. The Jan./Feb. '96 issue of *The Independent* mistakenly listed this fest as occurring in Oct. 1996. Yamagata is a biennial fest & the next edition will be held in Oct. 1997. We regret the error.

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SU-CITY PICTURES EAST PRESENTS: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic & The Film Strategists—story editors/post-prod. specialists will analyze work-in-progress. Multimedia & adv. technology consultations. Competitive rates. (212) 219-9224.

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Opportunities • Gigs

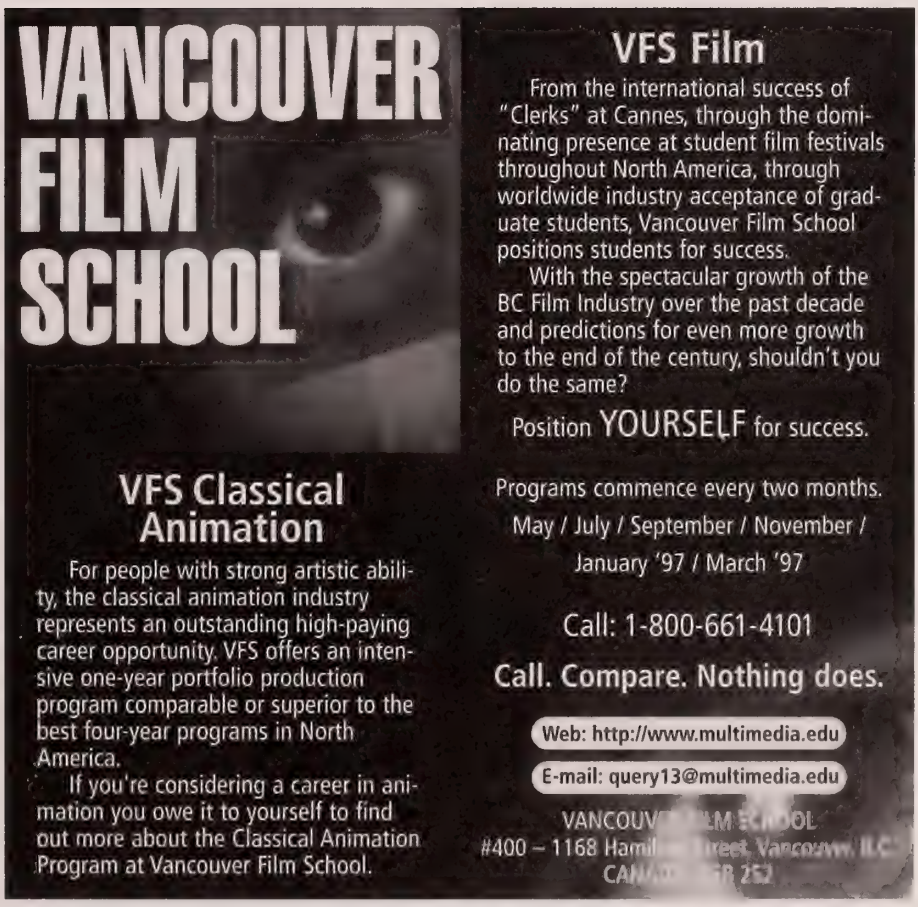
CREW NEEDED: Cinematographer, ass't camera, gaffer, best elect., ass't dir., sound recordist, boom operator, etc. needed to work on feature film w/ award-winning director. Send resume & references ASAP to: P.O. Box 873, New York, NY 10108.

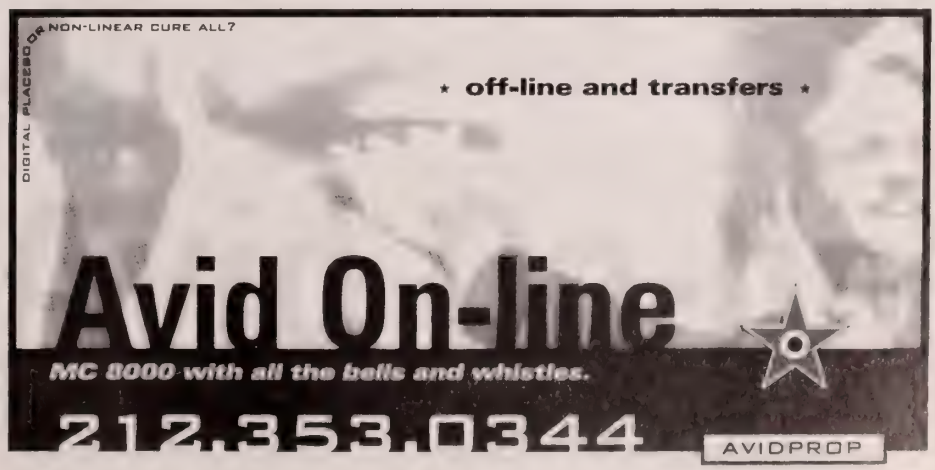
D.P., SOUND, A.D. & P.M. WANTED for 2-3 week shoot of low-budget independent 35mm feature, *Private Eye*, in Manhattan in May. If you have reasonable rates & exp. send resume to MONTE P.I. Inc., 630 Fifth Avenue, Level 20, NY, NY 10111; (212) 794-3000.

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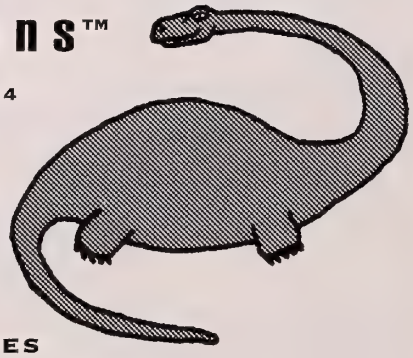




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tants &/or knowledgeable persons, send résumé or call Cliff Lyttle for interview. Mecca Motion Picture Corp., 1100 Circle 75 Pky., ste. 800, Atlanta, GA 30339; (404) 808-7139.

MEDIA FACULTY. Tenure-track ass't prof. for Spr. 97 & visiting fac. for Fall 96. MFA or PhD. Seek research scholar &/or creative artist in new media. Letter describing work; vita; evidence of teaching effectiveness & scholarship to: Search Committee Chair, Dept. of Media Arts, 226 Harvill Blg., Univ. of Arizona, Box 210076, Tucson, AZ 85721-0076. 3 references should send letters directly. Do not send creative work. Consideration begins 3/96 for visiting pos., 9/96 for tenure-track. EEO/AA/ADA.

PREPRODUCTION • DEVELOPMENT

LATERNA-ENTERTAINMENT, ind. film company, is accepting WGA-registered feature-length screenplays. Send script & brief synopsis w/ SASE to Laterna-Entertainment, 39 St. Marks Pl., ste. 3, New York, NY 10003-7946.

RUSSIA, CIS & E. EUROPE: Stretch your budget! US company in Moscow w/ contacts everywhere provides location scouting & prod. services. Fax: 011-7-095-216-8162 or moscinema@glas.apc.org. Member AIVF & IDA.

SCRIPTS/PROJECTS WANTED. Seek commercially viable films, TV & video; scripts (all genres); projects seeking development or completion funds; completed work. Screen Communications, fax (601) 268-6158 ext. 66 or e-mail 74677.3505 @compuserve.com.

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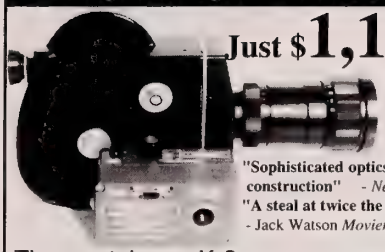
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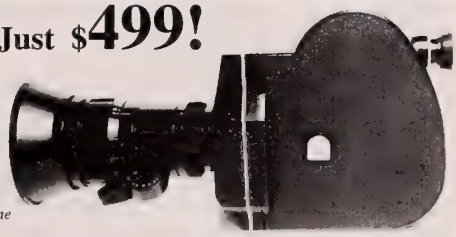
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Competitions

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST is accepting scripts from throughout US. 5 to 6 winners will be chosen to receive $500 cash award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: Ongoing. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop National Contest, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

Conferences • Workshops

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY accepting submissions for "Heart of America Awards," in categories of feature, short subject and doc. that relate to women, the image of women, or the American family. 1/2" VHS only. Postmark deadline: May 1. Entry fee: $15. Submit to: Heart of America Awards, American Legion Auxiliary, 777 N. Meridian St., 3rd Fl., Indianapolis, IN 46204; (317) 635-6291.'

INT'L FILM & VIDEO WORKSHOPS IN TUSCANY, ITALY. 30 1-wk workshops & master classes in cinematography, directing, editing, writing, producing & camera work. Also, 4-wk introductory summer program for university students and others. Workshops begin May 5. Contact David H. Lyman (207) 236-8581; fax 2558.

THE MID-EASTERN NYS COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA ARTS CONFERENCE will be held April 26 at the Tryon Inn in Cherry Valley, NY. Focuses on regional organizations' & ind. producers' need for access to media prod. & distribution resources & info. Followed by exhibition & discussion on video artists and music. Free & open to the public. Reservation deadline April 12; call (800) 721-8214 or email rap@tmn.com. Conference update on WWW: http://members.gnn.com/~improvart/ conf.htm.

THE PERRY GROUP invites writers to submit character-based unproduced TV comedies for The Comedy Lab, a free workshop. Scripts will be staged in a four-workshop series beginning in June 1996. Send to Gary Swartz, literary manager, 221 Avenue A, #18, New York, NY 10009.

STORYTELLING FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM, an event sponsored by the Kauai Institute and the American Film Institute, will address recent trends in filmmaking, new media, graphic design, sound design, Internet design & publishing with top figures in these fields. Hands-on digital workshops April 22-24, conference April 25-28, in Kauai, Hawaii. For info or to register, call (800) 999-4234 or (213) 856-7690; fax (213) 467-4578; WWW: http://www. afionline.org.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation and Tax Exemption," and more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

Films • Tapes Wanted

AIR & SPACE NETWORK, a new cable & satellite TV network, is looking for programs related to aviation, space, space flight, exploration, astronomy, weather, etc. Biographies are also of interest. Fiction, nonfiction, docs, educational, informational, or general entertainment. Contact: ASN, 2701 NW Vaughn St., ste. 475, Portland, OR 97210-5366; (503) 224-9821; fax: 241-3507.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF GRAPHIC ARTS, Washington, DC chapt., in search of innovative live-action & animated film shorts for a 2-hr. film festival in June. VHS previewing by April 30. Tapes returned. Please contact or send video to AIGA Film Night, Marty Anderson Design, 804 D Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002; (202) 544-1596.

ARC GALLERY jurying for solo and group exhibitions for the 96-97 season. Categories: 1. All media including performance, video & film. 2. Raw Space, a dedicated installation space. Deadline: April 30. Send SASE for prospectus: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 733-2787.

ART IN GENERAL seeks video works & guest-curated video programs for new monthly screening series. All kinds of work welcome, from experimental film & video to home videos; doc & activist to public access works. Send VHS tape (cued), résumé &/or brief statement & SASE to Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013. For more info, call Joanna Spitzner (212) 219-0473.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AXLEGREASE, a Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, is accepting all genres, under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled with name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201. (716) 884-7172; wheel-@freenet.buffalo.edu; WWW: http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia and Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For more info contact Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION seeks films & videos by black ind. makers, directors, or producers for "Black Vision" portion of *Screen Scene,* weekly 1/2-hr show that previews TV lineup & latest theatrical releases. Contact: *Screen Scene,* BET, 1899 9th St. NE, Washington, DC 20018; (202) 608-2800.

BLACK VIDEO PERSPECTIVE, new community TV prod. in Atlanta area, seeks works for/by/-about African Americans. Contact: Karen L. Forest (404) 231-4846.

BLACKCHAIR PRODS. currently accepting works of any genre for ongoing "Public Exposure" program. Works will be considered for a bi-monthly "video-zine," open-screenings, galleries, clubs, rave-parties, nat'l public-access programs, submissions to fests, competitions & calls-for-works. Let us use our marketing skills to get your works seen. No fee to submit. Send 1/2", Hi8, or 8mm w/ SASE for tape return to: Joel S. Bachar, Blackchair Prods., 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121; witerain@nwrain. com.

CAFE Y PELICULA looking for films & videos for possible monthly exhibition. Students' work welcome. No payment; ongoing deadline. Send 3/4" or 1/2" with appropriate release, credits, awards & personal info to: Cafe y Pelicula, PO Box 362991, San Juan, PR 00936-2991; crubin@caribe.net.

CHARISMATIC MASS TELEVISION seeks media art shorts for a new monthly screening series. All genres accepted in any length. Ongoing deadline. Send artist statement, videotape & SASE. 3/4" preferred, Hi8 or 1/2" OK; returnable with SASE. Syracuse University, Art Media Studies, attn. Justine Wood, 102 Shaffer Art Bldg., Syracuse, NY 13244.

CHILDREN'S MEDIA PROJECT seeks tax-deductible donations of film & video equipment. Needs monitors, cameras, decks, etc. 71 Robinson Ln., Wappingers Falls, NY 12590; (914) 227-1838.

CINCINNATI ARTISTS' GROUP EFFORT seeks proposals for exhibitions, performances & audio/video/film works to show in their galleries. Experimental, traditional & collaborative projects encouraged. Contact: CAGE, 1416 Main St., Cincinnati, OH 45210; (513) 381-2437.

CINE CLUB seeks VHS submissions of ind. shorts for future programs. Send SASE & brief résumé to:

Cine Club c/o Sophie Fenwick, 335 Court St., 82, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Also welcomes proposals from ind. curators & others.

CINEQUEST, weekly 1/2-hr. TV series profiling best of nat'l & int'l ind. cinema & video, looking for films/videos, all genres, less than 20 min. to air on 30 min. cable show. Work over 20 min. will air on monthly special in Orlando, FL, market during primetime. Concept of show is to stretch perceptions of conventional TV & expose viewers to scope & talent of inds. Submit on 1/2" or 3/4" video. Submissions need not be recent, no limit or deadline. Will acknowledge receipt in 10 days. Send pre-paid mailer for return. Contact: Michael D. McGowan, Producer, Cinequest Productions, 2550 Alafayia Trail, Apt. 8100, Orlando, FL 32826; (407) 658-4865.

CITY TV, an Emmy Award-winning, progressive municipal cable channel in Santa Monica, seeks programming of any length, esp. works about seniors, disabled, children, Spanish-lang. & video art. Our budget is limited, but we offer opportunity for producers to showcase work. Cablecast rights may be exchanged for equip. access. Contact: Lisa Bernard, City TV, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 458-8913.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for the Spirit of Dance, a live, 1 hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Produced at Cape Cod Community Television, South Yarmouth, MA. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER seeks film & videos in all genres for a Fall 1996 exhibition on contemporary issues of immigration in the US. Send preview VHS, resume & description of work to L. Somi Roy, Roy/Emmons Associates, 115 South Street, New York, NY 10038; (212) 227-6895; or print to Richard Peña, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023.

HALCYON DAYS PRODS. seeks video segments (1-5 min.) by 15- to 25-yr.-olds for video compilation show. If piece is selected, you may have chance to be video correspondent for show. Work may be editorial, real-life coverage, political satire, slapstick—you decide. Just personalize. Submit VHS or Hi8 (returnable w/ SASE) to: Mai Kim Holley, Halcyon Days Prod., c/o Hi8, 12 West End Ave., 5th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 397-7754.

HERE, a not-for-profit arts organization, seeks submissions of films & videos for 1995-96 season. 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", all genres & lengths. Installation proposals also welcome. Send VHS, resume & description of work to: HERE, 145 Ave. of the

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10-19 Copies	2.50	2.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	4.50	6.00	7.00
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Americas, frnt. 1, NY, NY 10013, attn: film/video. Enclose SASE for more info. about next season.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8") videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone # to: In the Mix, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

IN VISIBLE COLOURS FILM & VIDEO SOCIETY seeks videos by women of color for library collection. Work will be accessible to members, producers, multicultural groups & educational institutions. For info: Claire Thomas, In Visible Colours, 119 W. Pender, ste. 115, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1S5; (604) 682-1116.

THE KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape with brief bio to Lisa Deanne Smith, c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson Street, 6th fl., New York, NY 10013.

LATINO COLLABORATIVE, bimonthly screening series, seeks works by Latino film/videomakers. Honoraria paid. Send VHS preview tapes to: Vanessa Codorniu, Latino Collaborative Bimonthly Screening Series, 280 Broadway, ste. 412, NY, NY 10007; (212) 732-1121.

NOTICES

MIXED SIGNALS, award-winning cable TV series produced by the New England Foundation for the Arts, is accepting submissions for upcoming series on relationship between people & their work. Any style or genre. 28-min. max. w/ priority given to work under 6 min. Format: 1/2", though selected artists must provide a 3/4" or Beta broadcast-quality tape. Payment for selected work. Deadline: April 8. For appls & more info contact New England Foundation for the Arts, 330 Congress St., 6th fl., Boston, MA 02210-1216; (617) 951-0010.

NERVOUS IMPULSE, nat'l screening series focusing on science, seeks films/videos. Open to experimental, non-narrative & animated works that address scientific representation or knowledge or interplay between science & culture. Send preview VHS & SASE to: *Nervous Impulse,* Times Square Station, PO Box 2578, NY, NY 10036-2578.

NEW DAY FILMS, the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. (914) 485-8489.

NEWCITY PRODS. seeks completed or in-progress docs on all subjects for monthly screenings on professional large screen video projector. Committed to establishing forum for new voices. Send cassettes to NewCity Productions, 635 Madison Ave., ste. 1101, NY, NY 10022; (212) 753-1326.

NEWTON TELEVISION FOUNDATION seeks proposals on ongoing basis from ind. producers. NTF is nonprofit foundation collaborating w/ ind. producers on docs on contemporary issues. Past works have been broadcast on local & nat'l public TV & won numerous awards. Most are cur-

rently in distribution in educational market. Contact NTF for details: 1608 Beacon St., Waban, MA 02168; (617) 965-8477; ntf@tmn.com or walshntf@aol.com.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS, series broadcasting selected works statewide on public TV, seeks works of any genre (except corporate/instructional) produced by ind. artists currently residing in NC. Modest monetary compensation & telecast interview of artist for works selected. Entry fee is $15 for individuals, $5 for students & NC Media Arts Alliance members; separate fee for each submission. Contact Ellen Walters, NC Visions, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg., UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax 334-5039; ncvision@hamlet.uncg.edu.

OCULAR ARCADE, new on ACTV in Columbus, OH, showcases ind. video (art, doc, experimental). Send Hi8, VHS, or 3/4" dub to Ocular Arcade, D. Master, 135 West 1st Ave., Columbus, OH 43201.

OFFLINE seeks creative & independently produced videos. The hr-long show airs biweekly on public access channels throughout NY State & around the country. Submissions should not exceed 20 min. Longer works will be considered for serialization. Formats: 3/4", S-VHS, Hi8 or VHS. Incl. postage for tape return. *OffLine,* 203 Pine Tree Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850; (607) 272-2613; 72137.3352@compuserve.com.

THE OTHER SIDE FILM SHOW is looking for entries in all cats: narrative, doc, experimental, animation, etc. for TV series of ind. films/videos. Submissions should be under 30 min. 3/4" video preferred, but VHS acceptable. Send w/ SASE for tape return to U. of South Florida, Art Dept., 4202 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL 33620-7350, attn: The Other Side.

OVERWINED PRODUCTIONS, weekly intimate theater & public access program, seeks contemporary film/video in any format to be showcased in & around Detroit area. Contact: Patrick Dennis, 2660 Riverside Dr., Trenton, MI, 48183-2807; (313) 676-3876.

PLANET CENTRAL, new LA-based cable station focusing on the environment, global economy & holistic health, is looking for story ideas & video footage for new fall alternative weekly news program *Not in the News.* Send info to: Planet Central, c/o World TV, 6611 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 871-9153; fax: 469-2193.

REEL TIME AT P.S. 122, an ongoing quarterly screening series, now accepting submissions of recent ind. film & video works for 1996-97 season. Exhibition formats include S-8, 16mm, 3/4" & VHS. Send VHS submission tapes, written promotion & return postage to: Curator, Reel Time, P.S. #122, 150 1st Ave., NY, NY 10009; (212) 477-5829x327.

REGISTERED seeks experimental & non-narrative videos about consumerism &/or modern ritual for nationally touring screening. Send VHS for preview w/ SASE & short description to: Registered,

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Intro to Multimedia Technology
1 Saturday, April 13, 1:00-4:00

Intro to Fractal Painter 3.0
3 Fridays, April 19, 26, May 3 6:30-8:30

Navigation Design
3 Tuesdays, April 17, 24, May 1 7:30-9:30.

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3 Tuesdays, April 2, 9, 16 7:30-9:30

Digital Video for Film & Videomakers
3 Fridays, May 10,17, 24, 6:30-8:30

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attn. Joe Sola, PO Box 1960, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009.

RIGHTS & WRONGS, weekly, nonprofit human rights global TV magazine series, seeks story ideas & footage for upcoming season. Last yr 34 programs covering issues from China to Guatemala were produced. Contact: Danny Schechter or Rory O'Connor, exec. producers, The Global Center, 1600 Broadway, ste. 700, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-0202; fax: 2677.

SAN FRANCISCO SHORT FILMS, a new organization dedicated to supporting the short narrative film as a unique art form, seeks films under 35 min. in length for screening programs. Filmmaker must be resident of 415, 510, 408, 707, 916, or 209 area code regions in Northern CA. Films must have been completed on or after Jan. 1, 1993. All formats OK, but submit preview in VHS to P.O. Box 424520, San Francisco, CA 94142. Submissions can also be brought to monthly meeting, held first Thursday of each month at 7 pm at Colossal Studios, 15th St. & DeHaro.

SEEKING WORKS by ind. filmmakers. 16mm, 8mm & video for screening series in downtown Manhattan. Send VHS copy to Leslie Napoles, c/o CRC, 7th fl., 435 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast! Submit to: EDGE TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED for exhibitions/-screenings & a collection of essays considering the relationships between the Middle East & the West on a personal or geo-political scale. We wil be looking at crises of identity, nationalisms/borders, naming, gender/sexuality, class & the exoticization of difference. Send documentation of work in any medium, w/ postage if return requested: Public Domain, 186 Avenue B, #5, New York, NY 10009; ph/fax (212) 982-8967.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS is seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TOXIC TELEVISION seeks broadcast-quality, creative video shorts (under 10 min.) for alternative TV experience. Looking for works in animation, puppetry, experimental, computers, etc. Send VHS or 3/4" tape & résumé to: Tom Lenz, 6060 Windhover Dr., apt. A, Orlando, FL 32819.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

UNQUOTE TV, 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing new, innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, experimental, performance works under 28 min. Program seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote TV,* c/o DUTV, 33rd &

Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS is accepting video & 16mm film in all genres for next season. Fee paid if accepted. Send VHS tape w/ SASE to: Film Committee, UTICA, 88 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

VIDEO ICON, a new program focusing on innovative video/film art & animation, is currently reviewing work. Send VHS or S-VHS copy to: Floating Image Prods, 710 Wilshire Blvd., ste. 405, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 458-4550.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

Publications

AEIOU.2 (ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION INFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE) provides descriptions and submission information on over 220 exhibition venues, nat'l & int'l, showing challenging, alternative ind. film & video. Avail. for $7 (incl. addressed mailing label) from AEIOU.2, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, a computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 9577.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH GRANTS 1996, providing current info on nearly 6,000 funding sources, is now available. Volume is 1,224 pages and costs $135 plus 10% for shipping & handling, as well as sales tax in AZ & CA. To order, contact The Oryx Press, 4041 North Central Ave., ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; (800) 279-6799.

FELIX: A JOURNAL OF MEDIA ARTS & COMMUNICATIONS is published once a yr. by The Standby Program & Kathy High. Featuring articles & artist pages by established & emerging mediamakers, *FELIX* is dedicated to promoting dialogue on video art & ind. media. To order subscription or single issue contact: FELIX Standby, PO Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 0563.

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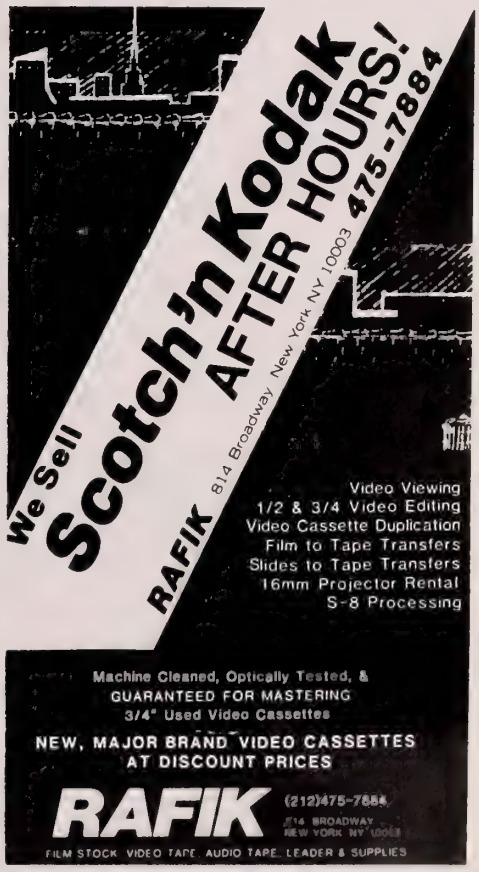
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LIBRARY OF AFRICAN CINEMA now includes 25 titles from 12 countries representing 22 directors. Incl. in the 1995-96 guide are new docs & feature films, a controversial South African TV series, an anthology of short films & a "performance film." Free copies avail. from California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St. #420, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196; fax: 6522; e-mail: newsreel@ix.netcom.com.

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at http://www.mediaalliance.org.

MEDIANET: A Guide to the Internet for Video and Filmmakers. Available free at http://www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or e-mail rriddle@infi.net.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION offers *History for Hire: Using Cultural Resources as Film Locations*, an ongoing series illustrating the benefits & drawbacks of film prods in museums, private residencies and along historic streets. $6 per issue; 10+ copies at $3 plus shipping & handling. Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 673-4286.

SHORT VIDEO MOVIES: To finish our handbook on the short video prod. process, we want to include your experiences w/ improvised scenarios or scripts, non-professionals or pros. Let's trade reels. Contact David Shepherd, Group Creativity, 2 Washington Sq. Vill. #70, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-7830.

NOTICES

Resources • Funds

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on an ongoing basis. Contact BF/VF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 3540; e-mail: bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat and 3/4" editing suite for independent creative projects. Doc, political, propoganda, promotional and commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor available. Video work may be done in combination with S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

DCTV Artist-in-Residence is now accepting appls for $500 worth of equipment access on ongoing basis w/in 1 yr. When 1 funded project is complete, DCTV will review appls on file & select next project. Pref given to projects already underway. For appl., send SASE to: AIR, c/o DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10013-4435.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specif-

ic projects. Activities that may be funded are: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks. prior to project starting date. Degree students are not eligible to apply. Call (312) 814-6750.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax 1114; piccom@-elele.peacesat.hawaii. edu.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr., $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center (ETC) is accepting appls. Program offers opportunity to study the techniques of video image in intensive 5-day residency program. Artists work on variety of cutting edge & hi-tech equipment. Program open to experienced video artists. Appls must incl. résumé & project description, as well as videotape of recent work (if you are a first time applicant), either 3/4" or VHS formats, w/ SASE for return. Write: ETC Ltd., 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

STANDBY PROGRAM is nonprofit media arts org. dedicated to providing artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER is dedicated to educators interested in using video technology as a learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating a nat'l network of educators who are interested in any or all aspects of the growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

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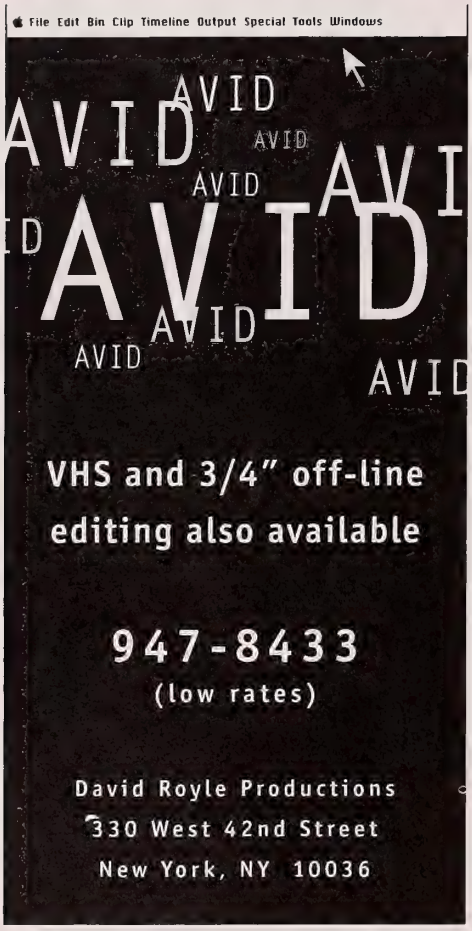
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MEMORANDA: continued from p. 64

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Washington, DC:
When: Monday, April 15, 7 p.m.: "Video Art"; Wednesday, May 15, 7 p.m.: "Interactive Technology and Independent Filmmaking"

Where: Washington Performing Arts, 400 7th St. NW (at D St.)

Contact: April: Rebecca Crumlish, (202) 328-8355; May: Lorie Paterson, (301) 340-9630/(202) 414-8151.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The AIVF annual membership meeting will be held Friday evening, April 26, at Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, NYC. The meeting is open to all; AIVF members will receive a separate notice in the mail.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

It's time to think about nominations for the AIVF board of directors. Board members are elected to a three-year term of office; the board gathers four times per year in NYC for weekend meetings (AIVF pays the travel costs if you live elsewhere).

We have an active board; members must be prepared to set aside time to fulfill board responsibilities, which include:

- Attendance at all board meetings and participation in conference calls when necessary;
- Preparation for meetings by reading advance materials;
- Active participation in one or more committees as determined by the organization's needs and as requested by the board chair or executive director; fulfillment of commitments within agreed-upon guidelines;
- General support of the executive director and staff as needed.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members in good standing; you may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old. To make a nomination, send or fax (212/463-8519) the name, address, and telephone number of the nominee and nominator; we cannot accept nominations over the phone. Nominations should be sent to the attention of Pamela Calvert. We will also accept nominations at the AIVF annual meeting on April 26.

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

The Center for Arts Criticism, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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BY PAMELA CALVERT

SPRING EVENTS

MEET AND GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF offices. *Free; open to AIVF members only. Limited to 20 participants. RSVP required; (212) 807-1400 x222.*

MICHELE FORMAN
Director of Development, ***40 Acres and a Mule Productions***
Spike Lee's independent production company
Event co-sponsored by Black Filmmaker Foundation and open to AIVF and BFF members.
Wednesday, May 5, 6:30 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENT *with legendary producer's rep* ***John Pierson*** *(Spike, Mike, Slackers and Dykes) at Schenectady salon April 3—see salon listings below!*

IN THE WORKS AN OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

Responding to popular demand, we have started a works-in-progress program for members. We're developing it month-by-month to serve the needs and interests of the members. So call to show your work, or come and see what's in the pipeline. *Four 10-minute slots per evening will be assigned on a first-registered, first-served basis, and are available to AIVF members only. You do not need to register or be a member to attend.*

When: Tuesday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.
Where: AIVF office screening room
Contact: Leslie Fields, (212) 807-1400 x222

UPSTATE NY MEMBERS ALERT

The Upstate Media Posse will host the 2nd New York State Media Festival on April 12-13 in the Shaffer Art Building at Syracuse University. Pam Calvert, AIVF's director of programs and services, will be participating as a panelist, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with upstate members there. The festival is geared toward independent producers, media artists, educators, activists, students, and all others interested in independent media. For more information about the program, call Cheryl Jackson at Squeaky Wheel, (716) 884-7172.

ADVOCACY FORUM

AIVF is sponsoring an advocacy forum with speakers **Joanne Chasnow (Associate Director; Human Serve/Vote USA), Mona Jimenez (Executive Director; Media Alliance) and Jamie McCullen (Telecommunications Coordinator; Libraries for the Future)**. They will address, among other issues, the Telecommunications Bill passed by Congress in February and its effect on independents, media diversity, access, distribution, emerging technologies, arts funding, and arts organizations' voter registration efforts. *You do not need to be a member to attend. R.V.S.P. appreciated.*

When: Wednesday, April 24, 7 pm
Where: AIVF office
Contact: Lisa D. Smith, (212) 807-1400 x 232

WATCH THIS SPACE ...
We are planning a program of Summer Intensive Workshops, focusing on the hard information you need to get your work made. **James Schamus; Morrie Warshawski**; a full day on the in's and out's of self-distribution—and more. Watch the May *Independent* for details, or call Leslie Fields at x222 for registration information.

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Austin, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Susan Walsh (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

DO WE HAVE YOUR TAPE? READ THIS!

For many years, AIVF has maintained a large archive of videotapes of members' work. In the process of moving to our new space, we came to the inescapable conclusion that having this quantity of work in our office is not serving its original purpose. If you sent a tape to us for the archive, and would like it back, please call Pam Calvert, (212) 807-1400 x 223, to arrange its return. *If we do not hear from you by June 30, we will erase your tape and donate it to a non-profit media center for stock.*

We have every intention of continuing to provide information about our members' work to programmers, distributors, funders, and educators; however, storing large numbers of videotapes here in our office is not the most effective strategy to achieve that end. We are working on a long-term project to create a computer database of work (both finished and in progress) that will be flexible and comprehensive. In time, we anticipate that this database will incorporate multimedia elements and be made available through the Worldwide Web. Stay with us, and we'll keep you posted.

Kansas City, MO:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Los Angeles, CA:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Swing Cafe, 8543 Santa Monica Blvd.
Contact: Pat Branch, (310) 289-8612

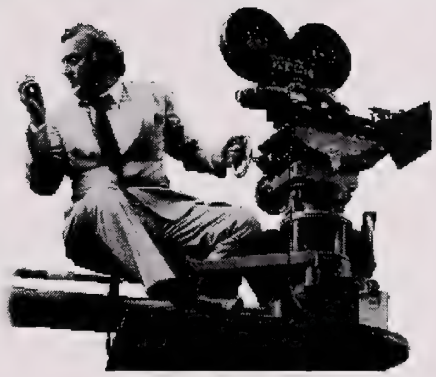
Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Guy Perrotta (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

Schenectady, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6 p.m.
Where: location tba
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269
Special Event Wednesday, April 3: Book-signing and presentation by ***John Pierson****, author of* ***Spike, Mike, Slackers, and Dykes****. Don't miss it!*

Continued on p. 62

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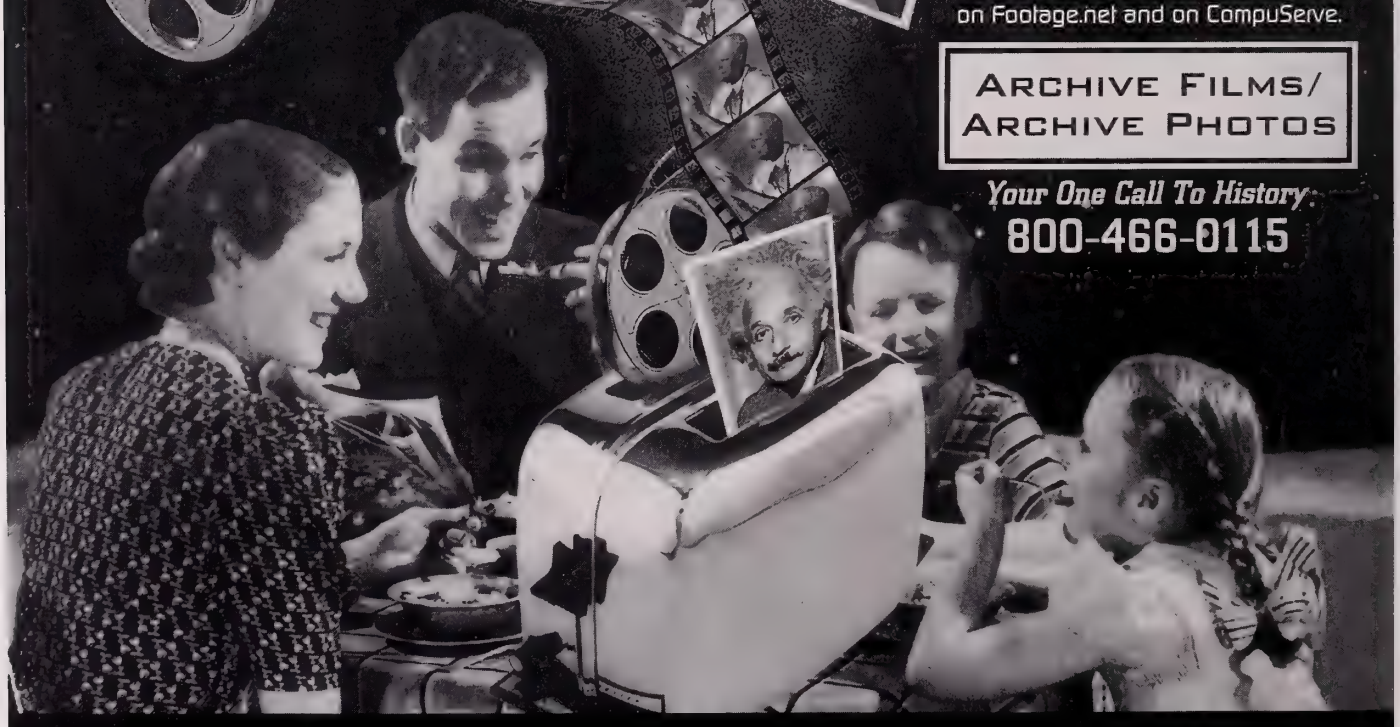


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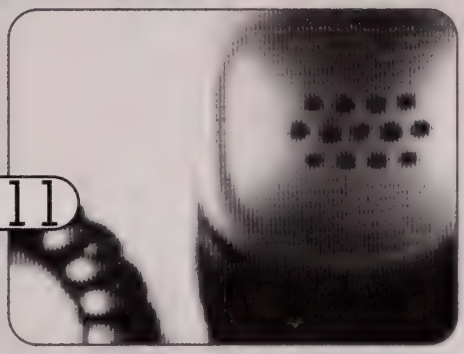
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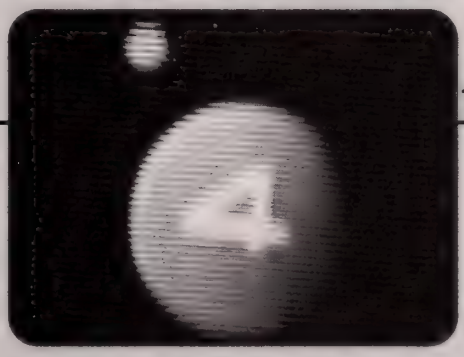
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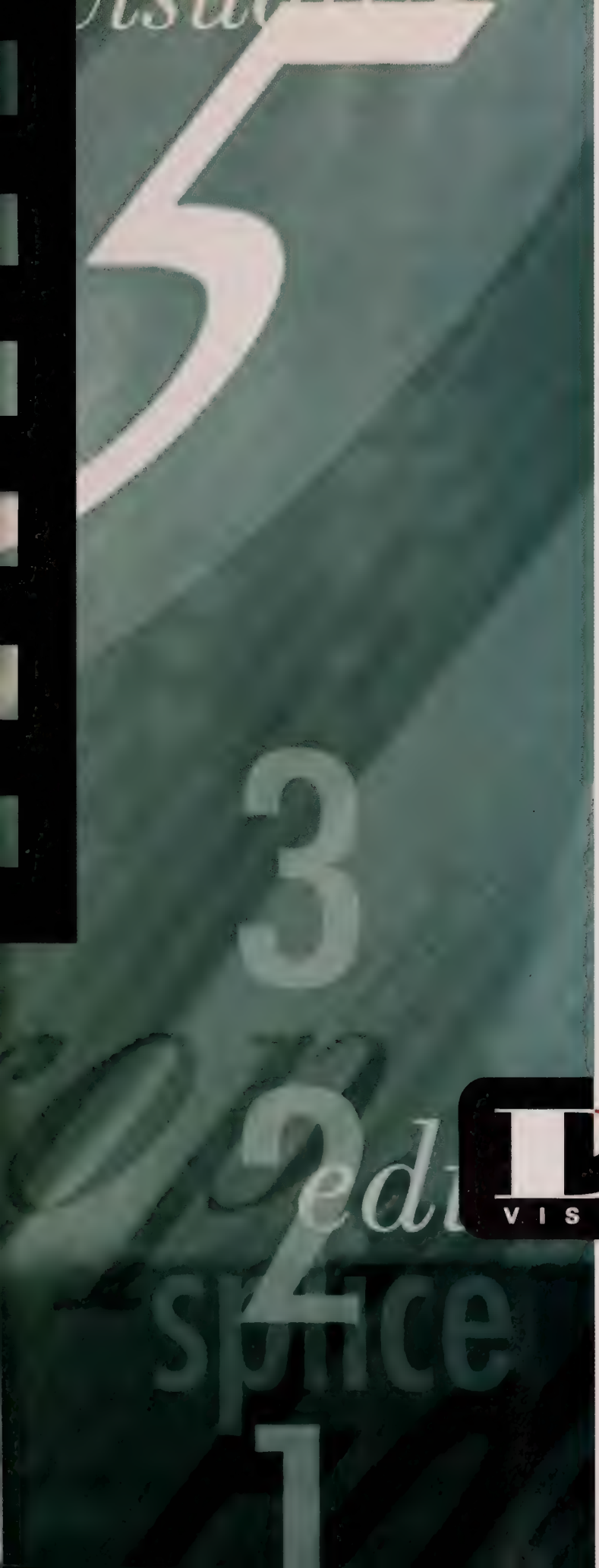


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the independent FILM & VIDEO monthly

MAY 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 4

Publisher: Ruby Lerner
Editor in Chief: Patricia Thomson
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Art Director: Daniel Christmas
Advertising: Laura D. Davis (212) 807-1400 x225
National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Fine Print (800) 874-7082; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press
Send address changes to: *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent film and video, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@ aol.com; http://www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF/ Second Class Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

Publication of *The Independent* is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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Letters to *The Independent* should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length.

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BY ARLENE GOLDBARD & DON ADAMS
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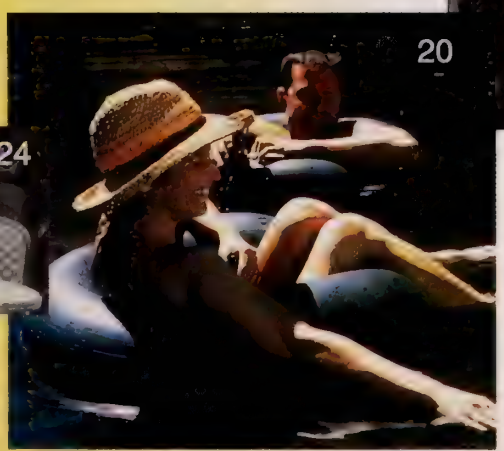
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The Cine Club Circuit in Eastern Europe
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COVER: *Four Corners of Nowhere* producer/actor Julian Rad blows off steam on set in Ann Arbor, where director Steve Chobsky managed to get by without paying for most locations because of their ties in the community. In this issue, Robert Dardon looks at other tips and tricks for writing and line-producing no-budget films. Photo: Mark Day
LEFT: *The Brothers McMullen* cast (top) and a recent shot of the New Day co-op.
ABOVE: A scene from Sundance crowd-pleaser *Walking and Talking*.

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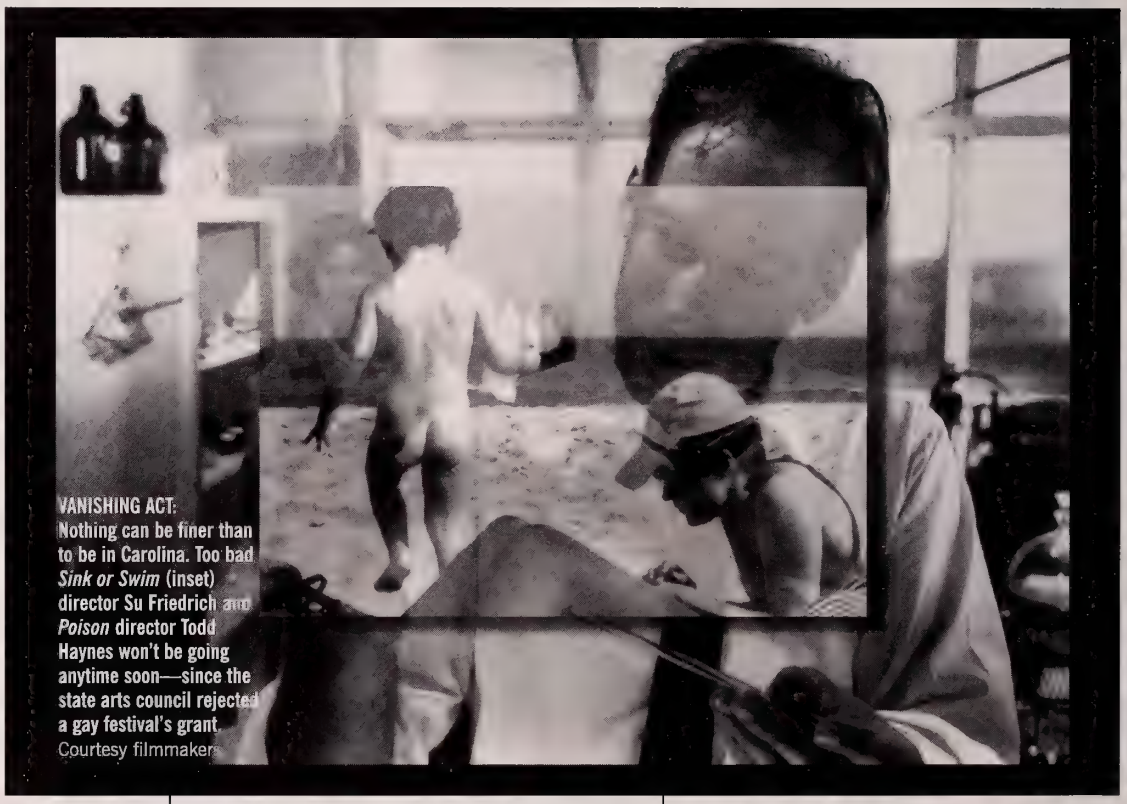
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Media News

Out of Sight

Nervous Nellies in North Carolina Reject Gay Fest

The North Carolina Arts Council has taken the unusual step of endorsing, then denying, a grant proposal from the Charlotte Gay and Lesbian Film Series to screen the work of two well-known independent filmmakers, apparently out of fear that the grant would anger legislators and cause a reduction in the council's funding.



VANISHING ACT: Nothing can be finer than to be in Carolina. Too bad *Sink or Swim* (inset) director Su Friedrich and *Poison* director Todd Haynes won't be going anytime soon—since the state arts council rejected a gay festival's grant. Courtesy filmmakers

The organizers of the six-year-old film series applied for the grant to bring New York-based filmmakers Todd Haynes (*Poison*, *Safe*) and Su Friedrich (*Sink or Swim*, *Rules of the Road*) to Charlotte to present and talk about their work. "It's very clear to us the reason the arts council ditched it was because they didn't want to sacrifice state funding for a $1,500 grant," says film series board member Robert West, who also serves as curator of film for the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte. "This is an explicit case of state arts funding being withheld because of the name of an organization rather than on artistic merit."

However, Mary Regan, executive director of the arts council, insists, "We've never funded organizations based solely on artistic excellence." She says the agency, which gives more than $4.5 million annually to approximately 1,400 applicants, "looks for a track record of strong, effective programming, a broad-based board, sound financial practices, and projects that fit with other things going on in the community." She adds, "We're looking at the long-range development of all the arts in the state. You can't consider just artistic excellence and get very far as a public arts agency."

The controversy centers around a meeting last May in which the council's Visual Arts panel reviewed 75 applications, including the film series' request for $3,000. The minutes from that meeting (which quote anonymous panelists) reveal that what started out as an enthusiastic response to the proposal turned into a heated debate. Panelists initially agreed that the quality of Friedrich's and Haynes's work was high and the organization requesting funds was sound. The application received a rating of 2.5 on a scale of 3.0 and was recommended for a $1,500 grant.

However, the next day some panelists, perhaps fearful of the specter of U. S. Senator Jesse Helms and his allies in the North Carolina legislature, reopened the discussion. One panelist called the film series, even though tax exempt and by law non-political, a "proselytizing effort." Another countered that the series' artistic vision is simply "to reflect gay life," adding, "This is a very homophobic conversation." Talk quickly turned to how going ahead with the grant might hurt the council. One participant asked, "Should we act out of political fear? Where do we draw the line?" An arts council staffer shot back, "Sometimes you change some of the things that you do to keep doing the things you want to do. A $1,500 grant can have terrible repercussions." The sentiment was echoed more bluntly by a panelist who insisted, "The council is extremely vulnerable in the legislature. This grant will be picked up. The publicity could harm our entire funding."

The panel then revoted and this time the proposal received a 1.875 rating—too low for funding. An African American panelist who had supported the grant commented that she was glad the council was "not discussing black funding 30 years ago, that there were some people willing to . . . not back down in order that [she] could be here today."

Later, several panelists called council staff expressing concern that the second vote was based on criteria outside the visual arts application guidelines. Regan denies the panel ignored its own rules: "The board is supposed to make the decisions that will best aid the arts in all the

state. That's an overarching responsibility. You have to make the best decision you can and go with it."

"It's very clear to us the reason the arts council ditched it was because they didn't want to sacrifice state funding for a $1,500 grant," says Robert West, board member of the Charlotte Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.

The film series board felt particularly angry after reading the council's recently adopted 1995-97 plan. Among the plan's goals: "To support arts programs that reflect and sustain the diverse cultural identities of the people of North Carolina" and "to promote a climate of inclusion, mutual understanding, and support among the diverse cultural groups which represent the state's arts community." "How was their decision culturally inclusive?" asks board member Tom Warshauer. "Maybe their plan should have said, 'We'd like to include everyone but gays and lesbians in our funding.'"

Filmmaker Su Friedrich found the panel's actions deplorable: "When people cave in like this it contributes to shallow thinking across the board. It's not even as though my work is this outrageous stuff with explicit sexual imagery. It seems to me that the decision wasn't about our work but about the fact that it was a gay and lesbian organization asking for money." Film series board member Elise Fullmer agrees: "Sometimes when people say they're doing something for the higher good, it's just an excuse for not doing the right thing. If the African American community had submitted a grant to them, would they have turned it down based on the name of the organization?"

One thing is sure: the issue of state-funded arts by gay men and lesbians won't go away in North Carolina. While plans to bring Friedrich and Haynes down to Charlotte remain on the back burner, the film series has submitted a new grant proposal to the council, this time to fund a program of gay and lesbian shorts, to be curated by producer Christine Vachon. Robert West remains hopeful that the council will give them another shot but he says, "If this one gets rejected, we're not going to keep banging our heads against a brick wall indefinitely."

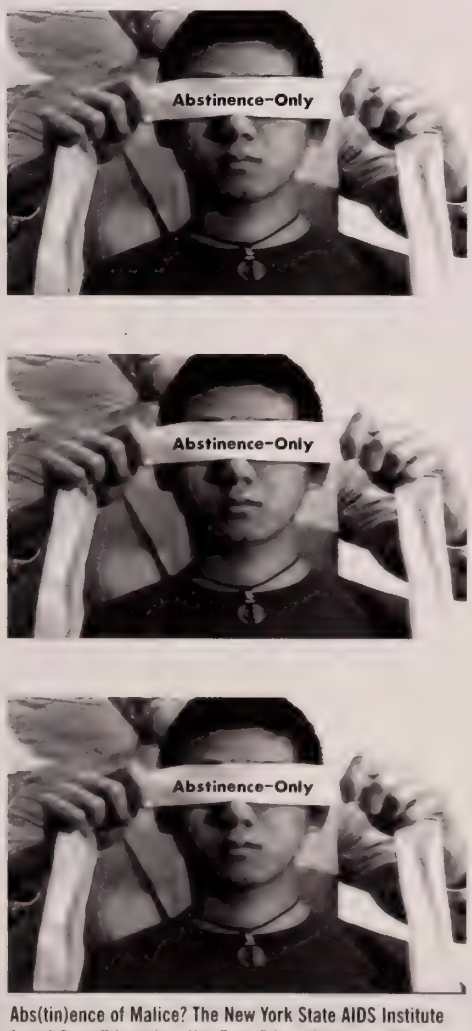
ANDREA COOOPER

Andrea Cooper writes frequently for The New York Times Book Review *and other publications.*

AIDS Video Vetoed

Peer Education, Not Fear Education, a video that promotes "reality-based" HIV/AIDS education in public schools, was designed to combat fear. However, the video seems to have generated fears at the New York State AIDS Institute, which decided not to show the tape at its annual conference in Albany last January 28-29. The video, produced by Tom Beer and Ionnis Mookas and directed by Mookas, was one of only three submitted for screening at the conference, which draws some 1,700 health care providers, representatives of community based organizations, and advocates for people living with HIV/AIDS. But in a move apparently calculated to sidestep controversy, the committee that reviewed the tapes opted to show the other two, *Risk Reduction for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing* and Dyke TV's *Lesbians and AIDS*, and reject *Peer Education, Not Fear Education*, the only tape specifically focused on education for teens.

According to Beer, his initial contact with the AIDS Institute conference programmer Hope Goldhaber had been promising; she even suggested he attend the conference to field questions from viewers. Just days before the event, however, Beer received word that there was "no way" *Peer Education* could be shown at the state-sponsored conference; the review committee, he was told, had found it too political.



Abs(tin)ence of Malice? The New York State AIDS Institute found *Peer Education, Not Fear Education* too political.

Courtesy DIVA TV

Frances Tarlton, spokesperson for the New York State Office of Public Health, which sponsors the event, says the reason for the rejection is that the videos were shown continuously in a room designed for "drop in" rather than "sit down" viewers, and the review committee was afraid most people would see only a few minutes of Beer and Mookas's half-hour tape before moving on. According to Tarlton, the committee expressed concern that sections taken out of context might give the impression the tape entirely dismisses abstinence as a possible choice for teens: "Seeing snippets of it instead of the piece in its entirety could give people the wrong idea."

But Beer thinks that the underlying issue is that the state government, becoming increasingly conservative under Governor George Pataki's Republican administration, is eager to avoid offending right-wing interests over the potentially explosive topic of HIV/AIDS education in public schools. While the bulk of *Peer Education, Not Fear Education* is taken up by a series of interviews with experts in the field and peer educators—a diverse group of teens, some of whom advocate teaching abstinence as well as safer sex—the video also critiques the "fear-based" and abstinence-only AIDS education endorsed by the religious right. *Peer Education* excerpts a video called *No Second Chance*, produced by Jeremiah Films (whose *Gay Rights/Special Rights* drew protests from gay activists); in one scene a teenage boy asks the adult lecturer, "What if I want to have sex before I get married?" She replies, "Well, I guess you'll just have to be prepared to die."

Peer Education, Not Fear Education was originally produced for AIDS Community Television, a weekly cable series in New York, and has already been widely screened without incident by, among others, the AIDS and Adolescents Network of New York; the American School Health Association conference in Kent, Ohio; the Metro Teen AIDS conference in Washington, D.C.; the Wisconsin State AIDS Program conference in Madison; and, via Free Speech TV, on public access cable television in as many as 45 cities. But it remains unclear how New York's youth will fare if educational materials such as *Peer Education, Not Fear Education* continue to be passed over by state officials tiptoeing around potentially controversial—and potentially lifesaving—information.

CYNTHIA CHRIS

Cynthia Chris is a frequent contributor to Afterimage *and has written extensively on AIDS activist media. Her writing has also been seen in* Felix, exposure, High Performance, *and* P.O.V.

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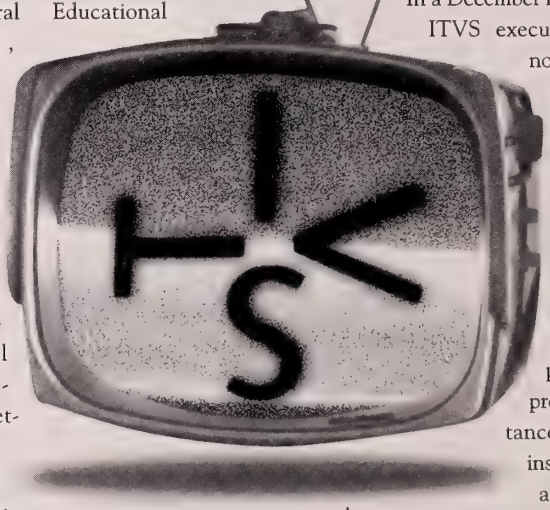
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MEDIA NEWS

ITVS Partnership Lures Station Dollars

Independents, choose your partners. A new funding program is supporting teamwork between independent media artists and their local public television stations.

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) in St. Paul, Minneapolis, recently inaugurated a Partnership Production fund, created in cooperation with the nation's public television network distributors: Central Educational Network, Eastern Educational Television Network, Pacific Mountain Network, and Southern Educational Communications Network. Each of the four regional organizations will distribute $200,000 of ITVS funds, in allocations of $10,000 to $50,000, for program proposals presented by partnerships of an independent producer and a local public television station. Participating stations must match the grant amount with financing or production services.



The new fund aims to encourage work that expresses local and regional views on issues often left out of the national spotlight. Proposed programs must tell stories that address a specific community's changes, challenges, and dynamics in ways that will generate interest among a wider population, a technique ITVS calls "civic journalism."

"A lot of times, in the rush to create programming that has absolute universal appeal or universal marketability, the local and regional views get lost in the shuffle," says ITVS outreach writer and editor Barry Madore. "It's valuable for those voices and opinions to be heard. Issues affect different communities in different ways. This will hopefully get people engaged in dialogue about the issues and stories presented in these programs. It's broadening the discourse, and that will impact how issues are looked at and how policy is decided in the country."

Applications were due in March, and ITVS expects to announce the recipients this summer. A second application round may eventually be announced, and ITVS will evaluate the program to determine whether or not to continue it in 1997.

The program will fund documentary, public affairs, or dramatic proposals. The acceptable styles of collaboration between producers and stations are equally varied—as long as the proposals are initiated and designed by the partners themselves.

In a December letter introducing the fund, ITVS executive director James Yee noted that the organization would not act as a "marriage broker" between interested participants. Madore explains further, "In some cases, it could be a situation where the independent comes in with the idea and is the creative juice behind the project, and the station provides the technical assistance necessary. In another instance, it could be more of a shared, back and forth relationship. We're really looking for independents and stations to find that balance."

One other aspect of the funded partnerships will remain constant: Editorial control over resulting productions will rest with the independent producers.

That doesn't mean, however, that participating stations don't have a role in the creative end of the partnership. The fund is designed to put material on the air that neither partner could have otherwise completed. "We're looking to provide an opportunity for both independents and stations to create the kind of work that they would like to create, but often don't get a chance to," says Madore.

ITVS was formed by the Telecommunications Act of 1988 to foster increased diversity in national public television programming. Funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the organization has provided production money, distribution and promotional support to independent producers for nearly 100 single programs and a dozen limited series broadcast throughout the country. This year, ITVS ended its long-standing "open call" process, a general funding mechanism that

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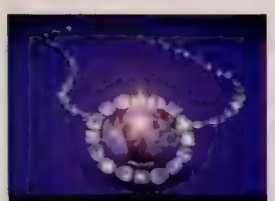
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operated with annual application deadlines. The organization will now accept grant requests for single programs and limited series year-round.

For information on the Partnership Production fund or other ITVS offerings, contact the organization at (612) 225-9035 or itvs@itvs.org.

SCOTT BRIGGS

Scott Briggs is a videomaker and a writer about art and culture in the Minneapolis–St. Paul area.

MEDIA NEWS

Latino Archive Launched in L.A.



"We as a minority community have not been in a situation of being able to preserve our history," says José Luis Ruiz, executive director of the National Latino Communications Center (NLCC) in Los Angeles. Preoccupied with basic issues of access and representation in the media today, few in the Latino community have previously thought of preserving the legacy of their past gains and triumphs in film and television. Meanwhile, for each film or video lost over time, a bit of the rich Latino history and culture in the United States also disappears.

But now the NLCC wants to change that with an ambitious plan to open the National Latino Film and Video Archive. As one of five minority consortium members affiliated with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the center has worked for over 20 years to produce and promote programs by and about Latinos for public television. By starting an archive, it expands its mission and begins serving as a central clearinghouse for Latino film and video.

Back in 1991, one phone call put the NLCC into the archive business. KCET, Los Angeles's public TV station, contacted Ruiz to see if he wanted to take over the hundreds of hours of programs that the NLCC, known as the Latino Consortium and then based at KCET, had originally created for public television from 1975 to the mid-1980s, primarily through two series—*Vistas* and *¡Presente!* Prohibitive storage costs had forced KCET to choose between finding someone else to look after the material and recycling the film stock.

Understanding its importance, Ruiz assumed responsibility for the collection. Overnight, the

NLCC became a repository for archival materials. But, like KCET, the center had to face the problem of how and where to store all the programs. Luckily, grants from the Arco Foundation and CBS, $5,000 and $12,000 respectively, enabled the NLCC to find a temporary home for the materials and to begin investigating the feasibility of a full-fledged archive.

The center's greatest hurdle—and primary focus—right now is preserving the more than 3,000 films, videotapes, and audiotapes already in its possession. With 2,300 videos on seven different formats, it faces the reality of video's limited 20-year shelf life. For the job of preservation, the NLCC contacted the Bay Area Video Coalition (BAVC). BAVC has drawn up plans to remaster onto digital Betacam all the 1/2" open reel-to-reel, Betamax, and Betacam and some of the 3/4" tapes—450 tapes in all. It's a costly process—around $100,000—and doesn't include the video, film, and audio transfers still left to do.



A new Latino archive will preserve film and video footage, like this scene from *¡Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*.
Photo: George Rodriguez

In addition to the tapes from KCET, the center has also acquired valuable archival material it came upon while producing a four-part public television series, *¡Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, broadcast nationally this past April and coproduced with Galan Productions. "It was really challenging to find footage to cover the time period for the series [1965-1975]," says producer Susan Racho. "So few of these events were covered by the mainstream media at the time." Overshadowed by television news coverage of the African American civil rights struggle, the Chicano movement was often not seen as a national story. And even when protests and marches were covered, most local news stations—faced with prohibitive storage costs and the expense of hiring an archivist—recycled the film stock rather than preserving it.

Fortunately, KMEX, a Spanish-language station in L.A., covered many of the key events and personalities from the Chicano movement. The NLCC discovered that 56 boxes of 16mm film and audiotapes from the KMEX news collection, covering the same period as the series, had been donated to the University of Southern California, where they sat untouched in a warehouse for four years. The footage filled in crucial gaps and provided a perspective not found in the limited English-language news coverage of many events—including the 1968 East L.A. Walkouts, where student protests were met with police abuse, as well as the death of Rubén Salazar, news director at KMEX and a former *Los Angeles Times* reporter, who was killed by police in 1970 under controversial circumstances. After negotiating with USC, Ruiz was able to transfer the material to the NLCC.

For now, monetary constraints and a lack of viewing facilities prevent the NLCC from opening the archive to the public. But by the year 2000, NLCC would like to see the archive grow into a research center, as well as a distributor of Latino films and videos, hooked into the Internet and outputting onto CD-ROM, in addition to traditional formats, like VHS. Some of the archive's materials would also be used in programming for the Latino Channel for Learning, a bilingual public television service currently in the works. Funding remains a major obstacle, as well as negotiating agreements with copyright owners. But the stakes are high. Says NLCC director of programming, Marissa Leal, "I really feel that there's going to be a whole erasing of culture and independent expression if we don't preserve these entities."

NLCC, 3171 Los Feliz Blvd., Ste 200, L.A., CA 90039; (213) 663-8294; fax: (213) 663-5606.

MICHAEL CHO

Michael Cho has just completed Another America, *a documentary that takes a personal perspective on Korean Americans and African Americans in the inner cities of Detroit and Los Angeles.*

Errata

In the March issue, Providence Mayor Buddy Cianci's name was misspelled in the article "The Campaign Game." Also in that issue, Ken Winokur, the photographer of Richard Leacock/Valérie Lalonde portrait on p. 26 was misidentified. We regret the errors.

MEDIA NEWS

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THE MAN BY THE SHORE

BY YOSHA GOLDSTEIN

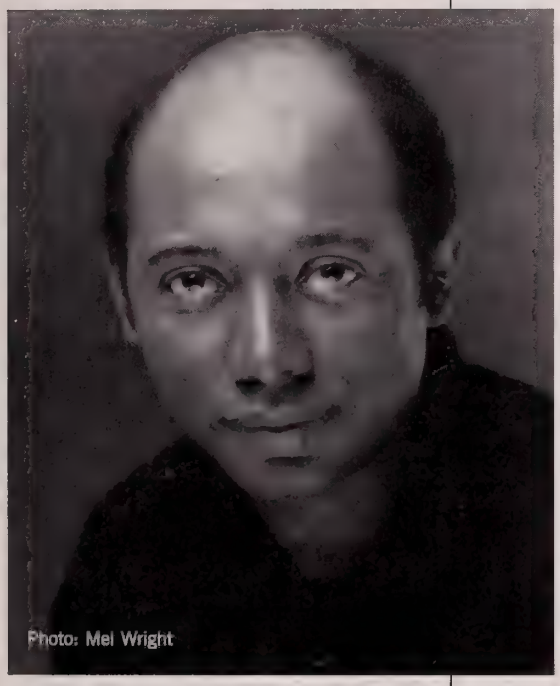


Photo: Mel Wright

"ALL SEA ANIMALS EAT UP MEN, BUT ONLY THE shark has a bad reputation," recites eight-year-old Sarah, skipping playfully through her grandmother's attic. As she opens the door to the attic's balcony, the serene daylight is abruptly offset by a scream from the neighboring yard. The girl sees her father standing below with several men over a slumped and brutalized figure; he frantically motions her away.

This primal scene of agony and betrayal repeatedly punctuates the narrative of *The Man by the Shore*, Raoul Peck's third feature, which is set in Haiti during the early sixties, when Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier's regime was consolidating its brutal control. Peck, who is galvanizing Haitian cinema's international presence, has been instrumental in developing an independent film community in Haiti by organizing screenings and creating opportunities for technical training.

Born in Haiti in 1953, Peck emigrated to Zaire while still a child, then studied in France and Germany, receiving a master's degree in industrial economics. After working as a journalist and photographer, he attended the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin, where he produced a number of narrative, documentary, and experimental shorts. He now divides his time between New York, Paris, and Port-au-Prince. Peck's cosmopolitanism has not diminished his strong connection to Haiti, which figures prominently in his cinematic landscape. His first feature, *Haitian Corner* (1988), depicts a Haitian exile, tortured in his homeland and struggling to recover from his emotional scars, who discovers that his interrogator is working as a short-order cook in a nearby restaurant. His next film, *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* (1992), took him back to Africa. The film tells the story of Patrice Lumumba's 200-day rule of the newly independent Congo through an assemblage of documentary footage, home movies, photos, and journalists' recollections. While both films have been widely exhibited internationally, in the U.S. *Lumumba* has been limited to the festival circuit, and *Haitian Corner*, shot primarily in New York, only just premiered in the city this past winter at the Contemporary African Diaspora Film Festival.

Peck returns to the subject of Haiti with his latest work. *The Man by the Shore* is an eloquent account of the ways in which political oppression can saturate one's consciousness and infiltrate the details of everyday life. Sarah's father is an ineffectual local military official whose weaknesses are exploited by Janvier, the town's ruthless Tontons Macoute (government-supported militia) leader. After Sarah's parents are forced to leave the country, she and her sisters find refuge in a nearby convent, then in their grandmother's attic. The story is recalled by an adult Sarah 30 years later, and the resonance with Haiti's recent history is pronounced. Produced shortly after Jean-Bertrand Aristide's brief presidency was obstructed by a military coup in 1991, Sarah's story underscores the intimate and recurring effects of Duvalier's regime.

"If you analyze the relationships between the different characters, there is always a fine line [between power and fear]," remarks Peck, seated in his downtown Manhattan apartment. "The grandmother plays a game with Janvier where she is sometimes very aggressive with him and where she sometimes stands back. This is one of the rules of the game, because power also needs a response to it, and you have to know where the line is. For me, the thing to remember is that all Haitians are playing this game."

Originally scheduled to film *The Man by the Shore* in Haiti, the 1991 coup d'etat forced Peck to look elsewhere for locations. He settled on the Dominican Republic, working there with the Haitian Embassy and Haitian workers' organizations to scout locations, cast extras, and hire crew. The project was a French/Canadian co-production for which percentages of French and Canadians in the crew matched each country's contribution to the budget. Concerned with the local consequences of the 45-day shoot, however, Peck insisted on including a significant number of Dominicans and Haitians in the crew.



The film garnered critical acclaim at Cannes in 1993, won awards at the Prized Pieces Festival, the Milan African Film Festival, and the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, and has had extensive European distribution. U.S. distributors, however, laboring under predetermined and, one might argue, outmoded conceptions of niche markets, have missed the boat. That is, until KJM3 Entertainment Group stepped in. This New York-based marketing and distribution company, known for its innovative work with Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust*, acquired the film last fall and is planning a platform release beginning this month in New York and Miami. KJM3 began building partnerships with such organizations as the Haitian Support Network and identifying press contacts in the Haitian émigré community in order to cultivate its target audience. Once this base is established, KJM3 plans to develop momentum to reach more general audiences.

"It's nothing new to say that the American market is really very closed," Peck observes. "The American film industry caused many problems recently at the GATT discussions, saying that the market had to be free. But they already have something like 80 to 90 percent of the [world] market. So it's like saying you want to have the freedom of a wolf in a chicken coop."

While organizing a film festival in Haiti last year, threats of censorship from a French/Haitian theater chain convinced Peck to purchase a movie theater in Port-au-Prince in order to offer an ongoing alternative to the usual action-adventure fare. Slated to open later this summer, the theater will be the first in the country to regularly exhibit independent and experimental film. It will also serve as a cultural center for Haitian cinema and

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theater, featuring production workshops and encouraging international exchange between filmmakers.

Peck is currently developing several projects, including an adaptation of the Russell Banks novel *Continental Drift* (starring Willem Dafoe), a program for French television, and a fiction film on Lumumba.

The Man by the Shore: KJM3 Entertainment Group, 274 Madison Ave., Ste. 501, New York, NY 10016; (212) 689-0950.

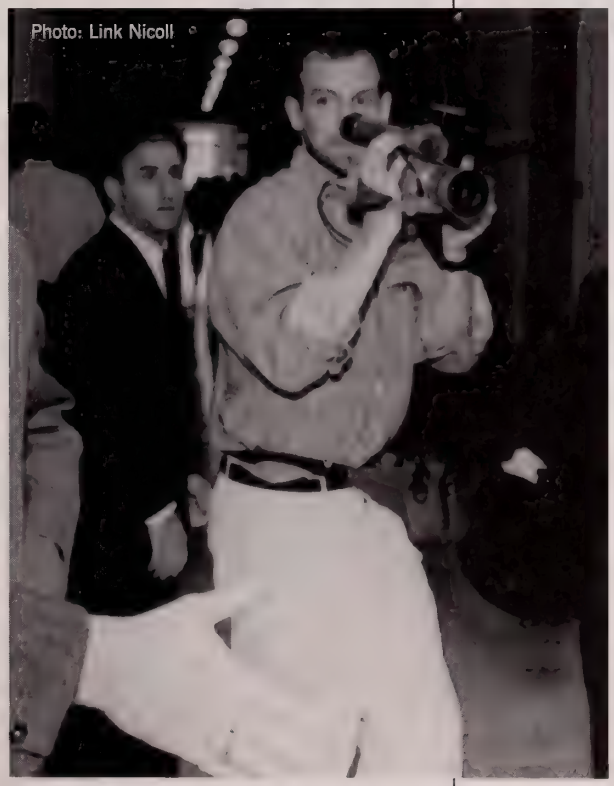
Yosha Goldstein is a freelance writer and independent videomaker living in Brooklyn.

JOSHUA SEFTEL

documentarian

TAKING ON THE KENNEDYS

BY NAN LEVINSON



"DID YOU THINK IT WAS BALANCED? DID YOU identify with his girlfriend?" asks Joshua Seftel, 27, leaning forward with urgency. "It" is *Taking On the Kennedys*, Seftel's third documentary, which will be aired on *P.O.V.* on May 28, and the urgency stems from both his history of self-education and from the charged political campaign the work documents.

In 1994, Seftel heard that Kevin Vigilante, a doctor he knew slightly, was running as a Republican candidate for an open congressional seat in Rhode Island against Democrat Patrick Kennedy, son of Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy. Seftel proposed shadowing Vigilante and shooting his 1994 campaign. Intrigued, Vigilante agreed to a brief trial period.

"I went in not knowing who was going to win," Seftel says, "But one thing I did know was that I had a story that had two elements Americans love: the underdog and the closest thing we have to American royalty." Better yet, the story was unfolding in Rhode Island, a state infamous for its dicey politics and also convenient to Seftel's home in the Boston suburb of Somerville.

Seftel's original plan was to shoot some sample footage and shop it around for funding, but as he tells it, "I shot for ten days, and I said I don't care if I can raise the money. I can tell that this is going to be great." Credit cards and determination got him through six months of filming, and he eventually received support for the $100,000 film from the Independent Television Service, PBS, and a New England Regional Fellowship through the now defunct NEA regional regrant program.

At the video's start, Vigilante appears as an idealist and a straight arrow. We see him talking compassionately with HIV-positive women at the clinic he established, watch him explain to a reporter that it was his frustration with how little gets accomplished by politicians that motivated him to run, and hear him vow of his campaign, "I'm not gonna make it dirty."

It's a pledge he's destined to break. Only when the campaign turns nasty—with Vigilante harping on Kennedy's past cocaine addiction and Kennedy accusing Vigilante of financing his medical education through a lawsuit against an elderly woman—does Vigilante advance in the polls. The video, like the campaign, gives short shrift to the candidates' platforms, focusing primarily on their TV ads. "That's what really shaped the race and I think that's what's shaping all major races today," Seftel says, insisting that their political differences are not important to the video. "It's more about a man—Vigilante—who decided to run for office, and his political education."

Working alone, Seftel shot 185 hours of footage. He rigged a field monitor and a Sennheiser microphone to his Hi8 camera so he would be relatively mobile and unobtrusive, which became important as the campaign heated up. Though Vigilante kept his word to give the director access to him and his staff, Seftel acknowledged that "there were moments when they asked me to turn the camera off. That was part of the deal: that they would be able to call time outs. [But] during crises, the last thing on their minds was the guy in the corner with the camera."

Vigilante lost by 10 percentage points, but the bleakness of *Taking On the Kennedys* cuts deeper than a failed campaign, documenting a morally bankrupt system in which ideas, beliefs, and purpose, if they matter at all, are a lot less influential than the ads that amounted to not much more than slickly-packaged mud-slinging.

Seftel tells this story primarily through cinema verité. The many interviews he did went unused, he explains, because "I decided in editing that the true moments that spoke were the verité moments. A filmmaker's dream is to illustrate an idea through action."

That insight, like most of Seftel's production training, came on the job. In 1990, armed with a B.A. in French literature and pre-med, a single film course, and one short student film, he wrote to every major production house in Boston and New York looking for work. Not surprisingly, nothing happened. Instead, from a whole other direction, someone offered him the chance to make a documentary as part of the first American relief team to visit Romanian orphanages. All he had to do was supply the equipment, the money, and the know-how.

Undaunted, Seftel raised $2,000 and embarked on a quick self-study course in filmmaking, teaching himself to edit by watching a few films over and over (including *The Congress*, by Ken Burns and *Jack Levine: Feast of Pure Reason*, by David Sutherland) until he understood the reason for each cut. He met the challenge and produced *Lost and Found: The Story of Romania's Forgotten Children*, nominated for an Emmy in 1993, the first Hi8 documentary to be so honored. Seftel's second work, *Old Warrior: Frank Manning and the Senior Power Movement*, won the 1995 National Media Owl Award.

"It's always been a struggle," he says, more bemused than bitter. "I don't think things fall into your lap in filmmaking, at least they haven't for me. I couldn't get a job, and I had to create my own." But things have ultimately worked out for him. "In some ways, that's a lot of filmmakers' dream," he notes, "to be able to tell your own story in your own way and have it be seen by a lot of people."

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Nan Levinson, a freelance writer in Boston, is writing a book about people involved in free expression conflicts.

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TALKING HEADS

NODI MURPHY & JACK LEWIS

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OUTSTANDING SOUTH AFRICAN GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL

BY CATHERINE SAALFIELD


Photo: Catherine Saalfield

NELSON MANDELA IS PRESIDENT. THE BOYCOTT IS over. Cultural workers from all over the world are being encouraged to participate in a new society. Dreams and lessons waft about like the cigarette smoke rising above the heads of Nodi Murphy and Jack Lewis, cocurators of the Outstanding South African Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. As we sit in a cafe around the corner from the Johannesburg venue of their second annual festival (November 2-30, 1995), they drink more coffee than the FDA allows.

Murphy and Lewis have brought me to South Africa to present my video work and that of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth I teach at the Hetrick-Martin Institute in Manhattan. Other foreign guests included Lauran Hoffman (*Bar Girls*), John Greyson (*Urinal*), and Pratibha Parmar (*Warrior Marks*). Over coffee, my hosts are wired, bickering, and exhibiting all the signs of being codirectors in the third week of a festival that is fueled less by money than by enthusiasm. The film program has already made the rounds to Pretoria, Durban, and Cape Town.

It all started in 1991, when Lewis began exhibiting feature films on video in townships outside Cape Town. He'd screen several in a row, enough to last eight or nine hours, so people could stay all night, since it was unsafe to go outside after dark and there was often no transportation home. Moviegoers would catch a few hours of sleep during the films, then head straight to work at daybreak.

When Lewis presented films to the emerging gay and lesbian community in 1992, he covered the windows of a local jazz studio with black plastic and projected such international favorites as Marlon Riggs's *Tongues Untied* and Gregg Araki's features. "People were quite prepared to sit on the floor in a very unproper situation and pay ten rand to watch videos," says Lewis.

At the same time, another white South African, Nodi Murphy, was organizing an international film festival in Cape Town. She tried to include "lots of queer stuff," she says, but the festival director thought that would be bad for business. Subsequently in 1993, when organizing to increase the visibility of queer media, she happened upon ABIGALE (the Association of Bisexuals, Gays, and Lesbians) and met Jack Lewis.

Since then, Lewis and Murphy have forged a pioneering partnership. With a modest grant from Holland, they presented the first Out in Africa festival in 1994 to sell-out crowds. In a brilliant community-boosting initiative, they also opened the iCafe, a cybercafe, in Cape Town, to subsidize their meagerly paid work.

Thanks to the duo's workaholic nature, the festival continues to enjoy all the trappings of a major international lesbian and gay festival: there's a full slate of queer film and video, a commendable effort toward gender parity, free tickets set aside for community organizations, youth, or people living with HIV/AIDS, and, of course, serious popcorn, coffee, and alcohol (depending on the time of day), fliers, posters, parties, and heaps of press.

What's most interesting, however, is how this event is actively helping to form new South

African queer communities and politics.

In 1994, filmmakers Isaac Julien, Greta Schiller, David Haugland, and AIVF board member Barbara Hammer attended and were able to contextualize the gay and lesbian material becoming visible in South Africa for the first time. (Hammer facilitated a short production workshop, then documented her experience in the video *Out in South Africa.*)

To date, South Africa has seen little in the way of homegrown "queer filmmaking." *Gay Life Is Best*, directed by Jack Lewis and Zackie Achmat (a co-chair of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality), has been identified as the first such tape; it documents the third Pride March in Cape Town in 1992.

This year's program included only two South African productions: *Hot Legs* (1994), a 16mm short by Luiz De Barros, and *The Dress* (1995), a short video by Stephen Jennings. Like much of the new gay culture here, these films, both by English-speaking whites, seem more indebted to the symbols and images of Europe and North America than to their South African roots. Both are culturally identifiable only by the accents of the hunky white boy actors and an unconscious, if extreme, atmosphere of repression and violence. As Murphy explains, "We are an American colony. The culture is pervasive here."

But South Africa has its own specific queer culture that's not yet reflected in its films. This involves particular colonial institutions: hostels for the mine workers, prisons and pass laws, as well as the township culture of shebeens (informal bars in homes). "These are the stories—the framework where queer identity flourished—that queer films could be based on," says Lewis.

In a conscious effort to stimulate local queer filmmaking, Lewis and Murphy incorporated a five-day production workshop in Cape Town. Canadian filmmaker John Greyson and I conducted this intensive production training for a multiracial group of 15 artist-activists who, for the most part, had never used video before. With humor and cultural specificity, the participants completed two short pieces for television that encourage support for the Equality Clause in the new Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The first national Constitution to do so, it offers a positive and groundbreaking starting point from which to launch fresh representations. The future for Murphy, Lewis, and their festival remains just a part of that dream.

Out in Africa, 275 Long St., 8000 Cape Town, South Africa; tel: (27 21) 24 73 77; tel/fax: (27 21) 24 15 32; nodi@icafe.co.za; jack@icafe.co.za.

Catherine Saalfield recently cocurated Divas in Training, *a program of videos made by, for, and about queer youth.*

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Field Reports

The Sum Total at SUNDANCE

BY DANA HARRIS

THE CLASSIC GRIPES ABOUT THE SUNDANCE FILM Festival have begun to sound a little silly. True, Sundance is sponsored by an enormous number of hip corporations. Yes, cell phones ring during screenings. And there's nothing quite like the spectacle of the narrow, slippery sidewalks of Park City, Utah, overflowing with more than 9,000 people. But in 1996, those once-ironic footnotes are now simply part of the whole.

For better or worse, Robert Redford's "little" festival is now a fascinating concoction of credit card filmmakers, celebrities, and industry players bound by the sticky goo of schmoozing. However, everyone keeps coming back for the same reason: this festival presents some great films.

Besides the documentary and feature film competitions, the festival had the new American Spectrum sidebar; a collection of independent films from around the world (World Cinema and Beyond Borders: New Native Cinema); and 56 short films (not including the animation program). In addition, there was a tiny section devoted to experimental filmmaking (Frontier), a tribute to director William Wellman, and a series of midnight screenings, as well as the Sundance Premieres, which included Hal Hartley's *Flirt* and Kenneth Branagh's *A Midwinter's Tale*.

All told, Sundance screened nearly 200 films in 1996. However, as *The Last Supper* screenwriter Dan Rosen joked, "If anyone knows someone representing William Wellman, he could really make a deal." Filmmakers didn't feel entirely comfortable with the alliance between the Sundance that prides itself on supporting independent filmmakers and the Sundance where celebrities are spotted and deals are made.

"The distributors and press that were circling around were regarded with a deprecating eye by the filmmakers," says Brad Anderson, writer-director of *The Darien Gap*, a funny film about a mooching slacker's search for love and truth. "The deal-making is what people were more interested in rather than the films themselves."

The hype has a way of elbowing its way to the front, which sometimes makes it hard to remember that people supposedly come here to sit in the dark and watch movies. As a result, it's unfair to look at Sundance as merely a festival; it's more accurate to call it a launching pad, one with as many attendant complications as NASA.



Photo: Patricia Thomson

The American Spectrum

There's something perverse about holding an event this big in tiny Park City. While the inevitable claustrophobia does build something like camaraderie, this year the ski resort town was the proud recipient of near-constant snowstorms during the festival's January 18-28 run. This led to a few cancelled screenings when prints (and the planes they were on) couldn't make it to Salt Lake City.

While the ubiquitous white slush often made getting to the screenings slow-going, there were more movies to see than ever. By last October's deadline, Sundance had received 750 features—25 percent more than the previous year. With too many films and not enough slots in the Competition to show them, Sundance inaugurated the American Spectrum, a noncompetitive sidebar of 20 dramatic and documentary films.

The American Spectrum proved to be an excellent opportunity to see some films that would have otherwise been left out in the cold. One was Luis Meza's ultra-low-budget and bone-dry comedy, *Staccato Purr of the Exhaust*, a story of a young man's coming of age by any means necessary. "I wish I'd seen more films, but I had a whole heck of a lot of fun," says Meza, voicing a familiar sentiment. "The reception was warm, but professionally, I was hoping it would open the doors a little wider than it did. I didn't think we'd be as buried as we were in the American Spectrum. We felt like outcasts because we just weren't connected. We didn't have a publicist. It was more like, 'Here we are. What do we do now?'"

Another American Spectrum film, Chris Smith's $14,000 wonder, *American Job*, provided an unforgettable portrayal of a man working through the maze of the minimum wage workplace. Russ Hexter's faux documentary *Dadetown* showed the tensions in a small town when high tech industry moves in as blue collar jobs are on the decline. *Personal Belongings*, a moving documentary, traces filmmaker Steven Bognar's attempt to come to terms with his emigrant father, as his father tries to do the same with his Romanian past.

Peter Cohn's *Drunks*, which showed the inner sanctum of an AA meeting, received a very warm response. "There's lots of people in recovery," says Cohn, who made his living for the last 10 years as an unproduced screenwriter. "It beat waiting tables, but it was getting frustrating," says Cohn. "I made this film to empower myself."

On a lighter note, John Walsh's *Ed's Next Move* offered the gentle comedy of a rice geneticist from Wisconsin trying to find life and love in Manhattan. "Being in the American Spectrum is a mixed blessing," says Walsh. "It might be better to be in competition because you get looked at more seriously, but what was good was we couldn't lose. You're marginalized and you have fewer screenings, but it's easier [for Spectrum films] to find boosters because you have the underdog factor working for you. Either way, though, the amount of attention and opportunity is huge."



Peter Cohn's *Drunks* is an intimate look at the inner sanctum of an AA meeting. Above: Richard Lewis struggles to stay on the wagon. Photo: Toby Mcafee

The Unofficial North American Market

The question "What have you seen that's good?" was always a conversational icebreaker, but some of the loudest buzzing wasn't about the films themselves but about whether or not someone bought them. Sundance's status as a market is entirely unofficial, but that hardly matters to the hundreds of agents, producers, and distributors seeking fresh talent and the next *Brothers McMullen*.

"The Sundance Film Festival has been more mythologized than any other festival in the country," says Christian Gaines, a Sundance film programmer. "But the 'market' activity that goes on here—they are ardent supporters of the festival. We encourage them wholeheartedly, but we feel that they've chosen this festival by the quality of the film. It's not about marketing. It's about saluting independent film, and it's always been that way."

A few films were already spoken for. Todd Solondz's *Welcome to the Dollhouse* and Stacy Title's liberal revenge fantasy, *The Last Supper*, were both snapped up by Sony Pictures Classics before or at the Toronto Film Festival, and Fine Line hooked up with Bryan Gordon's romantic comedy *Pie in the Sky* at Telluride. October Films and Jim McKay were in negotiations over *Girls Town* before Sundance, but waited until the festival to go public. However, there was plenty left to inspire the classic Sundance feeding frenzy.

Films that were picked up included Lee David Zlotoff's *Care of the Spitfire Grill*, for which Castle Rock paid $10 million. The sum inspired much gasping, especially for those who failed to note that the project reportedly had a $6 million budget. Fine Line paid $2.5 million for Australian Scott Hicks's *Shine* (a Sundance Premiere), a purchase that inspired very public apoplectic fits from Miramax's Harvey Weinstein, who wanted it. However, Miramax did pick up Nicole Holofcener's *Walking and Talking*. Indie stalwarts Good Machine produced *Walking and Talking*, but Holofcener says the film's financing path was fraught with the traditional boulders and potholes. "It took five years. I didn't have to do any of the fundraising myself, but it was still a long, ugly road," says Holofcener. "We sold off territories and raised money from shareholders. A few years ago it looked like we'd have the money to shoot, but it fell through. In a way, I'm glad it took as long as it did. Any earlier, and I might not have been completely ready."

Also quick to sell was Susan Streitfeld and Julie Herbert's *Female Perversions*, which was snagged by October Films. From the American Spectrum, *Ed's Next Move* went to Orion Classics, Lisa Krueger's *Manny and Lo* went to Sony Classics, and *johns*, Scott Silver's story of young hustlers on Santa Monica Boulevard, went to First Look.



Left: Christopher Münch (*Hours and Times*) was back this year with *Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day*, which won the Cinematography Award. Photo: Brooke Dillon

Below: *Walking and Talking's* delightful Anne Heche. Photo: Marty Granger, courtesy Miramax Films

"Keep your expectations low and any success seems wonderful," advises Brad Anderson, director of *The Darien Gap* (right). Photo: Claire Folger

John Schultz, writer-director of *Bandwagon*, says he had expected to sell his film while at the festival. Unfortunately, bad weather and bad sound hampered the first Sundance screenings of his comedy about the life of a North Carolina alterna-band. But everything came together for the final screening, the crowd went wild, and it wasn't long before he was in final negotiations for purchase of the film by Lakeshore Entertainment, an independent production company based at Paramount. Schultz says that distributors are "waiting in line" for the picture, which he's currently polishing with recuts and sound mixing.

Plans for *Bandwagon* include a soundtrack album handled by superstar producer Don Was, as well as a music video—just the sort of things that might make some independent filmmakers grumble about selling out. However, Schultz cut his teeth directing "the making of" promo films for *Jurassic Park* and *Hook* and is proud of his crowd-pleasing instincts. "My friends and I started out by making movies that were fun to watch," says Schultz. "I have the audience in mind when I shoot the film."

Documentaries and Shorts, In Their Place

While features cause most of the commercial ruckus, documentaries are subject to the same thrills of packed screenings and great word-of-mouth. *Hype!*, an entertaining examination of the marketing of "grunge" and the selling of Seattle's music scene, was a buzz favorite. "When you've finished the film just days before, like I did, it's like going from zero to 60," says Doug Pray, director of *Hype!* "You're getting no attention, and suddenly you're surrounded by all these people genuinely interested in independent films."

According to Tricia Regan, who codirected and coproduced the doc *A Leap of Faith*, "The best part is getting accepted to Sundance. The lion's share of attention goes to the feature films." It took Regan and partner Jenifer McShane five years to create the documentary about an integrated school in Northern Ireland that lets Catholic and Protestant children grow up side by side. Irish television provided seed money, and Regan says the rest came "with great difficulty."

While Regan and McShane had no money for a publicist or snazzy press kits, they made do with Irish tea bags labeled with *A Leap of Faith* stickers.



"It paid off. We got an extra screening because we sold out," Regan says. "But it was very difficult, really uphill. We've discovered the buzz is just about everything. The film stands on its own, but the climate [for sales] depends a lot on how it's received."

Traditionally, shorts receive even less attention than the documentaries, but this year any short film that made the cut had the inherent honor of being culled from a whopping 1,200 submissions. Nichol Simmons, who took a painfully wry look at dating in *Dry Mount*, says her film was three years in the making. ("I don't work well without a deadline.") The film took an honorable mention at the awards ceremony, but Nichol had already gone back to Dayton, Ohio. Fellow Ohioan Steven Bognar paged her to ask permission to make her acceptance speech. "I was at a Denny's pay phone," says Simmons. "Steve called when I was having breakfast and asked, 'Are you sitting down?'"

Mary Engel says she wrote, directed, and produced the documentary short *Ruth Orkin: Frames of Life*, about her photographer mother's work, because no one wanted to put in the same effort she did. "There aren't any books of her work in print, and people seemed to respond to the images," says Engel, who is the executor of Orkin's estate. "Initially, I wasn't going to make the film; I'd never done anything like it before. But both of my parents were filmmakers, so it certainly was part of my life growing up. Getting into Sundance was tremendously inspiring and motivating. All of the attention is on the features, but Sundance really took care of us in terms of being receptive and getting us in whatever we needed to get into."

Who Won What

Despite the perpetual fascination with distributors' release schedules, by the last days of the festival the award tensions were running high. *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, a darkly comic look at the hell of being a preadolescent nerd, received the Grand Jury Prize for dramatic films. *Care of the Spitfire Grill*, a drama about a convict trying to start over in a small town, won the Audience Award. *Girls Town*, a starkly realistic tale about the friendship of three inner-city girls-verging-on-women won the Filmmaker'sTrophy, as well as a special award for outstanding collaborative merit. The black-and-white tale of a young man's love affair with a dying railroad, *Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day* (Christopher Munch, writer-direc-

tor; Rob Sweeney, cinematographer) won the Cinematography Award.

There was little dissension as to who deserved the documentary prizes. *Troublesome Creek: A Midwestern* (by Jeanne Jordan and Steve Ascher), a personal look at the effects of the disappearing American family farm, won both the Grand Prize and the Audience Award; and *Cutting Loose* (by Susan Todd and Andrew Young), which documented the annual madness of Mardi Gras, won both the Filmmaker's Trophy and the Cinematography Award.

The Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award went to *Big Night*, a tragicomedy written by Stanley Tucci and Joseph Tropiano about the struggles of two brothers and their failing restaurant. *The Celluloid Closet*, Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman's documentary of how Hollywood portrays homosexuality, received the Freedom of Expression Award. Special Recognition for Artistic Merit went to the Muhammad Ali documentary *When We Were Kings*, by Leon Gast, and to Lili Taylor for her role as Valerie Solanas in *I Shot Andy Warhol*. The Special Recognition in Latin American Cinema Award went to *Madagascar*, by Fernando Perez (with honorable mentions going to Tomas Gutierrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabio's *Guantanamera* and Marcelo Pineyro's *Wild Horses*). The Special Recognition in Short Filmmaking went to Britta Sjogren's *A Small Domain*, and honorable mentions to *Dry Mount* and Francine McDougall's *Pig!*

For some films, the official recognition acts as a jump start; *Troublesome Creek*'s dual honors led to a flood of press attention and distributor interest. "During Sundance, we had great word of mouth, but by the end of the week, we felt kind of invisible," says codirector Ascher. "But after the awards, all sorts of distributors made themselves known. We got a lot of coverage we would not have gotten otherwise."

However, an award sometimes had to be simply its own reward. "Since one of my film's strengths is its cinematography, it was gratifying to receive the cinematography award," says Munch. "The film got the recognition I was looking for, and some people responded quite well to it, but the film is unsold. General word of mouth about [a film's] commerciality pre-forms what it can or can't do on a commercial level. I think the film has a lot of commercial possibilities, but distributors don't form their own opinions as much as latch onto popular estimation."



Munch screened *Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day* at New York's New Directors/New Films in March, and he wants to get it into Cannes. "I hope we build up enough press to get a U.S. release, but otherwise we'll do self-distribution," says Munch. "Everybody professes an interest and enjoys watching it, but the bottom line is it's hard to find people who will be in business with you."

"Keep your expectations low and any success seems wonderful," says Brad Anderson, sounding suspiciously like his dissolute antihero in *The Darien Gap*. "For me, the most enjoyable part was meeting other filmmakers. I wasn't looking to launch my career or anything like that, but now I've got a certain credibility factor. This was my first festival, and we got a good reaction and a good critical buzz. It's taken me a lot further than I ever would have expected."

Dana Harris is managing editor of The Independent.

FIELD REPORTS

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Der Supermarkt

The Berlin International Film Festival

BY PATRICIA THOMSON



Gay Paris, where women flocked in the 1920s to avoid traditional roles. Andrea Weiss and Greta Schiller's *Paris Was a Woman*, one of Berlin's most talked about documentaries, examines the lives of a few of the city's most famous expatriates, including Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Beach, and Djuna Barnes. Courtesy filmmakers

BACK IN 1984, AMERICAN INDEPENDENTS TOOK the Berlin International Film Festival by storm. That was the year of Bette Gordon's *Variety*, Julia Reichert and James Klein's *Seeing Red*, and Sheila McLaughlin and Lynn Tillman's *Committed*. It was the year *Heroes* director Alexandre Rockwell shipped over an authentic New York Yellow Cab as a publicity stunt (and had in tow an attention-catching bevy of beautiful girls). "Everyone was asking, 'What are these American 'indies?'" recalls Munich Film Festival programmer Ulla Rupp. "It was the first time they came to Europeans' attention—these young, colorful Americans."

Since then, American independents have done well in Berlin and have developed an abiding affection for it as a "filmmakers' festival," full of enthusiastic, intellectually curious audiences who are more interested in films and filmmakers than in the glittering Hollywood stars who pass through town. Independents also consider Berlin the best festival from which to gain entree into the European market. But while Berlin's reputation as a magnet for arthouse buyers is no doubt deserved, many filmmakers arriving there for the first time have inflated expectations. It's time for a reality check on this much ballyhooed event.

THE BERLIN EXPERIENCE IS NO DOUBT MOST FRUITful for those who already have it made. Todd Solondz, for instance, arrived at the Berlinale (held this year from February 15 to 26) with name recognition, his film *Welcome to the Dollhouse* having taken off like wildfire at the Toronto International Film Festival and Sundance. He already had U.S. distribution locked up and was represented in Berlin by a foreign sales company (Alliance Media, which sold the lucrative German TV and theatrical rights to Kinowelt within the week, among other territories). All Solondz had to worry about was showing up on time for his SRO screenings and the back-to-back interviews arranged by his publicist.

Most U.S. independents, however, come to Berlin without an experienced hand to guide them. For these solo flyers, it takes a few trips to get oriented. "It's grey, cold, and lonely," remarks Berlin first-timer Joseph Destein, who entered his feature about a Latino farm family in Marin County, California, *Land of Milk and Honey*, in the concurrent European Film Market. Compared to other festivals, Berlin has "much more of a business feeling. It's not like at Cannes, which is like a huge social event," he comments, adding, "[Berlin] is not set up for newcomers."

"Overwhelming" is the word most frequently used to describe this massive event, which offers multiple screenings of over 400 films and attracts 15,000 guests. A detailed map allows newcomers to quickly find their way to the dozen or so theaters. But it can take until the week's end to learn a number of other critical details—like how to get party invitations (track down the hosting organization's office or booth and ask); which buyers are present (a consolidated list appears in the back of the European Film Market guide); and which festival screenings have English subtitles, for starters.

"It was tearfully hard," AIVF board member Barbara Hammer recalls of her first of three trips to Berlin. "It's such a contrast today. I'm having such a great time, because I know so many people." Indeed, unlike many of the stressed-out first-timers, Hammer seems relaxed and confident. She knows what to expect: for her kind of experimental, lesbian-themed documentaries, there are great audiences and plenty of festival and exhibition invitations. And there were; by mid-festival, Hammer's autobiographical *Tender Fictions* was invited to play in Amsterdam, Brussels, Cologne, Turin, and Los Angeles. "I find more of an audience here than at Sundance," she asserts. On top of that, Hammer reports that foreign sales rep Jane Balfour "is looking" at *Tender Fictions*, and German TV is now interested in the film she brought to Berlin in 1993, *Nitrate Kisses*.

Being in the festival's Forum section, Hammer also knew she needn't sweat the

German theatrical rights for *Tender Fictions*. Uniquely, the Forum operates a small distribution company, called Friends of the German Archives, which retains the subtitled print created for the festival by the Forum and distributes this to the German theatrical and nontheatrical markets, unless a bigger company, like Kinowelt, comes along. "No other European festival does this," says Forum codirector Sylvia Andresen. Nor do Berlin's other sections, which include the Competition, the Panorama, a children's section, and various retrospective sidebars. "The Forum section was formed with the idea of giving works distribution, and not letting them languish on the shelf."

Unlike many of the festival neophytes, who concentrated with single-minded intensity on promoting their films and hung close to the block-long CineCenter (which houses the festival's offices and the sprawling, bustling market), Hammer knew when to push her work and when to sit back, relax, and let the process spin out on its own accord. She took time off to attend some festival screenings, and even broke away entirely from the festival's gravitational pull, visiting a local gallery to peruse the photo archives of Dada artist Hannah Hoch, the subject of a future commissioned documentary by Hammer. She also struck up a friendship with an experimental documentary filmmaker from the Ukraine, Nelja Pasitochaik (in the Panorama with *Tysmienica*), who offered to travel with Hammer to the Ukrainian village where Hammer's grandmother lived and her half-uncle painted murals in the church, for another of Hammer's projects. "It was a gift to meet her," Hammer says.

If you count the actual sales Hammer made during the festival, she came away with zip. But if you count her screening invitations, press coverage, and the many contacts she made and renewed, any of which can grow and bear fruit in unanticipated ways, then Berlin was a bonanza. Which demonstrates a point often made to filmmakers by festival veteran Lynda Hansen: "I would always tell filmmakers to know up front that they may be walking into a minefield. You really have to determine what your objectives are when you're showing a film in the market. If the objectives are purely sales, this may not be the right place; it depends on the film. I'd always encourage filmmakers who are interested in coming over and looking for presale money or coproduction money, or just getting to know the international community, and using the market as a jumping off point."

Andrea Weiss agrees. This was her fourth time to Berlin with partner Greta Schiller. "We came over, not with lowered expectations, but knowing that, with any documentary or experience film, each has a particular market. And you can only hope it will break out of its niche," Weiss says. "You know not to come to Berlin expecting that five festival invitations will make you rich."

The Panorama had invited Schiller and Weiss's *Paris Was a Woman*, a group biography of a circle of women artists, writers, and bookstore owners living in the liberating cultural milieu of 1920s Paris. As it turns out, Schiller and Weiss stand a very good chance of breaking out of their documentary niche, their U.S./U.K. production being one of the most talked-about works. *Paris Was a Woman*—also the title of a book by Weiss—is a solidly researched piece that delves into the love affairs, rivalries, and considerable professional accomplishments of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, Shakespeare & Co. founder Sylvia Beach, novelist Djuna Barnes, Collette, and others.

"We came over with a good situation: we had a sales agent, a German distributor who threw us a party, and a poster," says Weiss, who nonetheless wasn't quite prepared for the enthusiastic reception the film received. "We're overwhelmed by the response—the amount of interest from festivals, TV, and nontheatrical [buyers] from around the world," she says. "People are chasing us. It sounds like a luxurious situation, but it's actually quite stressful." (So much so that Weiss admits to spending the previous afternoon holed up in a Turkish bath "after a tense day of meetings with distributors.")

Without a doubt, documentaries and experimental work—like *Paris Was a Woman* and *Tender Fictions*, or Michael Wallin's *Black Sheep Boy*, Lynn Hershman's *First Person Plural*, Jay Anania's *The Pagan Book of Arthur Rimbaud*, and Michael Benson's *Predictions of Fire*, to name a few challenging films—do well to come to Berlin. There's a level of visibility and respect for such work, and buyers attending Berlin are more likely to be seeking alternative fare than those at Cannes or other mega-markets.

This is not to say, however, that there's an even playing field at Berlin. This is a market that favors dramatic features. It's a place where films like *The Wedding Banquet*, *Slacker*, and *Clerks* can generate excitement among audiences, buyers, and press—or films like this year's *Things I Never Told You*, a charming romantic comedy shot in Portland, Oregon, by Barcelona director Isabel Croixet and starring the ubiquitous Lili Taylor.

But less commercial work and TV-oriented fare has a tougher time. As Weiss noted, five festival invitations may be all such films get, for a number of reasons.

First, the European television market has become harder to crack as privatization creeps in. Even within the past two years, there has been a marked change. "I've been told by German TV buyers that they have to watch the ratings now and cannot afford to show small films," says Munich's Ulla Rupp. Public stations like ARD and even ZDF, once a bastion of support for U.S. independent work, are now going head-to-head with the advertising-supported private channels, and it's affecting their acquisitions. "In the mid-eighties, ZDF had five or six U.S. coproductions going," says Rupp, plus "eight or nine presales per year." Today there are "very few," she notes. "It's true elsewhere in Europe as well. Everyone is going for bigger-budget fare."

Second, Berlin doesn't attract as many TV buyers for documentary as one might think. The Arte contact, for instance, was in town for only one day. Many buyers head straight to the major TV markets, MIP and MIPCOM, held in Cannes in the spring and fall. "I'll do well there," predicts Films Transit president Jan Rofekamp, a foreign sales agent whose current slate includes three U.S. documentaries: Thomas Lennon and Michael Epstein's *The Battle over Citizen Kane*, Alan Miller's *Fiddlefest: Roberta Guaspari-Tzaras & Her East Harlem Violin Program* (both Oscar nominees), and Todd Robinson's *Wild Bill: A Hollywood Maverick*. "I have no concern about selling these," he confidently says, noting that he plans to "go slow" in Berlin, collecting a worldwide blanket of festival invitations, then hone in on television sales during MIP.

As for those films repped by their directors, a random sampling of five market films gives a sense of the kind of concrete results one might expect from Berlin:

- Dramatic feature, *My Dubious Sexdrive*. As of 10 days after the festival, director Lucy Phillips has gotten a call from the Icelandic national broadcasting network; six U.S. and European festivals have requested cassettes; and she is in serious discussions with one American theatrical distributor.
- Documentary, *My Knees Were Jumping: Remembering the Kindertransports*. Melissa Hacker received an invitation from the London Jewish Film Festival, plus interest from festivals in Ireland, Vienna, Israel, and Germany; a theatrical release in Berlin and Vienna is likely; Hacker is in negotiations with two foreign sales agents and a U.S. theatrical distributor; and she is talking with an American/German coproduction team about a dramatic remake.
- Short, *The Marionette*. Sean McManus is winding up negotiations with Turbulent Arts for a limited theatrical release in the U.S. and may get a home video deal for Sweden with the Stockholm-based Mohawk Media. He said festival invitations are likely from festivals in Tampere, Finland; Helsinki; and São Paulo and are possible from London and Cambridge, U.K.; Los Angeles (Out on the Screen); and San Francisco (Frameline).

Continued on p. 27

The Cine Club Circuit of Central Europe

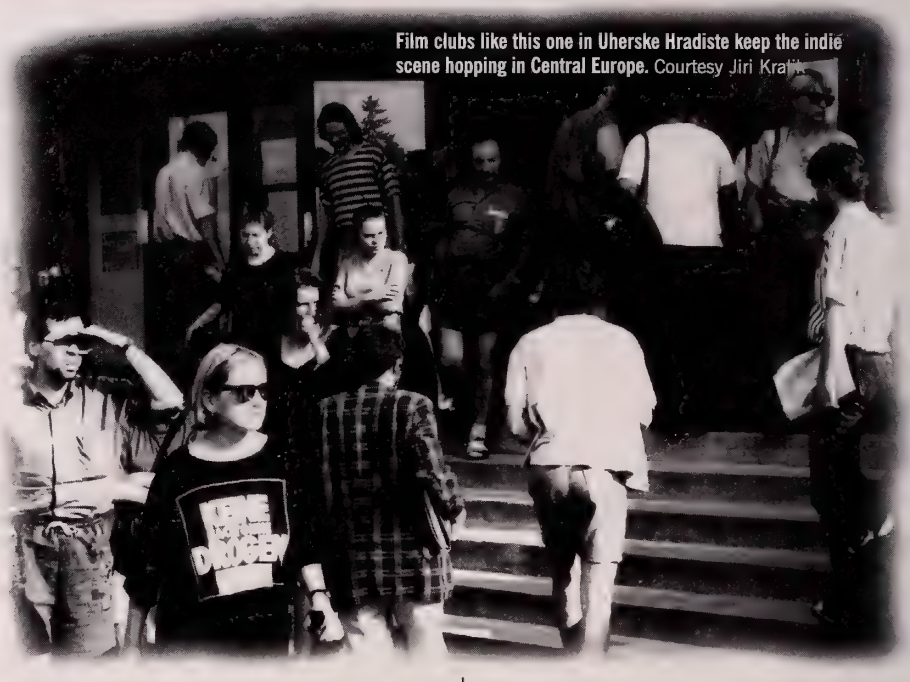
BY CATHY MEILS

Uherske Hradiste is a small town of just over 20,000 located in a pleasantly rural area near the Czech and Slovak border. At first glance, this is an unlikely spot for film buffs—but twice a week, as in most towns and cities across the region, a cinema there is turned over to the local film club for screenings of otherwise inaccessible films. And each year, Uherske Hradiste hosts a summer film school, becoming for 10 days a haven for film students and film club representatives from Central Europe. This year some 800 people are expected to attend the event, held July 26-August 4, during which 160 films will be screened.

Film clubs, the equivalent of American university film societies, are liberally sprinkled across this region. According to Jiri Kralik, who runs the Uherske Hradiste film club and summer film school, there are 70 such clubs with 35,000 card-carrying members and use of 150 cinemas in the Czech and Slovak Republics alone. Like all other film club organizers, Kralik is a volunteer with a day job—he manages two cinemas—although most film club organizers are teachers, office workers, or students. And he's a young man with a mission: to buy 100 quality films over the next 10 years for the Czech and Slovak association of film clubs.

But Kralik is in a double bind. Under Communism, film clubs were funded by the state and automatically received any film labeled as "art." Now the film clubs derive their budget from the sale of memberships and admissions (both at under $1), and money is tight. Further, the major distributors, who more and more are picking up the kind of quality independent films attractive to film clubs, are often reluctant to deal with the clubs and the small profits they offer.

Small independent films seeking a life after the film festival circuit could find a market here. The catch? Don't expect much beyond the cost of the print, if even that. Kralik reckons that under $3,000 is a very good purchase price for a small film, and Eva Szabova, coordinator for Central European Film Clubs in the International Federation of Film Clubs, suggests that the cost of the print plus a small flat fee falls within her clubs' budgets. On top of the purchase price, the film clubs must invest another $1,000 to $2,000, most of that going toward subtitling, so choices are carefully made. The film clubs are also willing to buy used prints, a more financially feasible option for many filmmakers.



Film clubs like this one in Uherske Hradiste keep the indie scene hopping in Central Europe. Courtesy Jiri Kralik

Szabova is the liaison between organizations in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, the Ukraine, the Baltic states, and the eastern half of Germany. The Czech and Slovak Republics work together in acquiring films and will be purchasing as many as 16 this year. They've begun cooperating with Poland, which shares a similar language and film club distribution network, and which will buy about six films in 1996, as will Hungary. Countries like Russia and the Ukraine have almost no money for film purchases, and the Baltic republics often team up with the Scandinavians. In Western Europe, Szabova says, film club operations differ from country to country. Both Szabova and Kralik are open to hearing from American independent filmmakers, with the clubs interested in adding "classics, outstanding works, and small films" to their archives.

The two liaisons outlined possible ways for independent filmmakers to connect with Central Europeans. Kacerova suggested that a group of filmmakers put together a rental package of their prints to circulate throughout the region, first sending cassettes to her to prescreen. Although the film club association can't provide airfare, local accomodations can be arranged for directors able to accompany their screenings. Kralik is able to offer similar arrangements for the summer film school festival, adding that with so many film club reps present, there's also the possibility of selling a print here.

Szabova did offer one consolation. "You will have a wonderful audience with a real interest in discussing the film," she said, adding, "The summer film school is truly a celebration of film." And as Kralik says, "Maybe there are some directors who want their films to sit on a shelf, but here, at least, they will be seen."

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Cathy Meils writes about arts and culture in Eastern Europe and is the Prague correspondent for Variety.

BERLIN con't from p. 25

• Experimental narrative, *The Pagan Book of Arthur Rimbaud*. Jay Anania received an invitation from the Troia festival in Portugal and has been approached by two U.S. theatrical distributors and a home video buyer.

• Work in progress, *City Farmers: Survival in the Urban Landscape*. For Meryl Joseph, the market was about making "deep connections" with TV stations, producers, and distributors. She had "very useful" one-on-ones with people from Arte, WRD, and RAI, as well as Films Transit, the Denmark National Film Board, and a Cologne production/distribution company, among others.

It's not many places a filmmaker can find and talk to so many industry players under one roof, Joseph notes. When such relationships finally bear fruit, it can be difficult to pin down what role a given conversation in Berlin played. As Phillips says, "You have this seed, and you water it and water it, and you don't really know where it comes from, but it blossoms into this tree." Deals evolve over time. That may be a hard pill for people wanting quick closure, but it's a lesson fledgling filmmakers would do well to learn before heading to market.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SALES AGENT, PRIOR EXPERIence at Berlin, or a film in the festival proper; if you're there on your own, riding the U-Bahn to the buyer's hotels loaded down with promotional flyers, acting single-handedly as your own publicist/agent/negotiator, then American Independents and Features Abroad (AIFA) can be a lifesaver.

Small but visible, the AIFA market booth is located just by the stairs everyone climbs to the CineCenter cafe, the prime watering hole for market attendees. Ironically, until U.S. sales rep Sandy Mandelberger branched off to start his own booth this year, the AIFA booth was the only visible presence for American film, independent or otherwise, in Berlin's vast market. While European governments, television stations, and production companies pour significant currency into elaborate brochures, posters, and colorful booths that can stretch for 50 feet, currently there's no entity in the U.S. that sees fit to promote American film—except the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), organizer of the booth for the past 10 years. (Kodak has been instrumental in sustaining the booth over the years, aided by contributions from a variety of individuals, foundations, and nonprofit media organizations, including AIVF.)

The booth got its informal start the year "those colorful American indies" made such a splash. Timothy Ney, then head of the Independent Feature Project (IFP), organized and single-handedly manned a booth for the American indepen-

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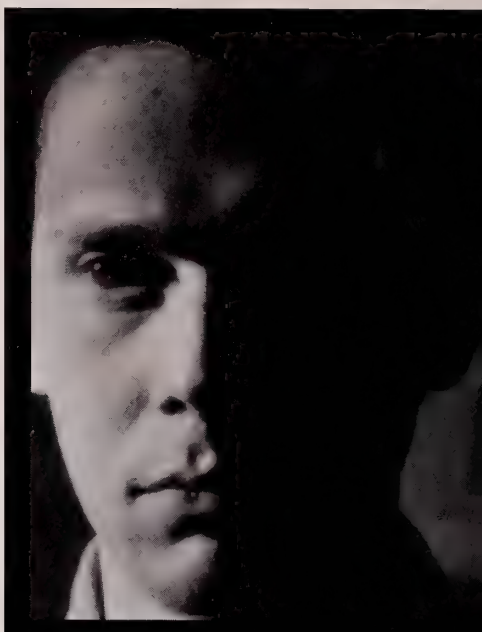
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Noah Harrison as the brooding poet in *The Pagan Book of*

INSET: Melissa Hacker, director of *My Knees Were Jumping* outside a Kodak brunch for American independents. Photo

dents in the festival, many of whom had been in the IFP's fall market. The operation was somewhat informal and definitely low budget (at the booth's two official dinners at Ax Bax, a cozy and excellent restaurant started by Austrian artists, filmmakers had to pay for their own meals).

In 1987, NYFA's Lynda Hansen stepped in, and the booth as we now know it had its official start. It began ambitiously, paying for AIFA posters, advertisements, and the market fees for festival films. These perks were eventually trimmed, and this year AIFA dropped its press conference and moved its party to less sumptuous digs (the America Haus, which, while running short of hors d'oeuvres, served some of the best dark beer around). Despite the cutbacks, the booth managed to serve its purpose: providing independents with a homebase and orientation point.

"When I came to Berlin before [with *Steal America*], I was pretty overwhelmed. This time, being with the AIFA booth has made it so much better," says Lucy Phillips. "It's all the little things: They try to get you [market] tickets; they point out press people; they find you if someone's interested in your film." They'll even track down a local flea market if the airline loses your luggage, as they did for Sean McManus. In addition, AIFA provides orientation sessions and makes available several European liaisons, like Ulla Rupp and John Marshall, secretary general of the documentary division within the MEDIA Programme of the European Union.

But while AIFA's 30 participating filmmakers universally praise the operation, run this year



Rimbaud, directed by Jay Anania. Courtesy filmmaker

mbering the Kindertransports, with some stiff company
cia Thomson

under the fluid direction of Ian Bernie, both American and foreign buyers were less than enthusiastic about the films offered. "I've been terribly disappointed in the selection," says one sales agent. "And I've been hearing this from the buyers' side. Plus, [the filmmakers] are very aggressive, and the buyers don't like that."

Regaining distributors' interest and confidence is just one of the challenges facing AIFA. Another is keeping itself afloat. Kevin Duggan, NYFA assistant director of artists services, confirms, "It is difficult for us to continue to support this program; it became more difficult when we lost NEA funding several years back. We continue to recognize the importance of AIFA and supporting the indie presence in Berlin, but we are reviewing what is the best way to achieve that goal." The options they're considering "run the gamut," he reports. "We very well might do this next year," or NYFA might look to other organizations to increase their involvement as partners, among other possibilities.

"One thing that was clear this year is that the American independent scene seems to be burgeoning," Duggan says. "There was really great demand from producers, which led to us accepting one of the largest slates we've ever had there. Also it's pretty clear that the booth itself had its busiest year."

And without it, it's pretty clear that independents would face a far greyer and lonelier Berlinale than that of the past decade.

Patricia Thomson is editor of The Independent.

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"No-budget" movies were written to be made for no money; they cannot be made out of just any script.

Cheap Tricks: How to

BY ROBERT DARDON

The success and consequent publicity (or is it the publicity and consequent success?) of films such as Robert Rodriguez's *El Mariachi*, Ed Burns's *The Brothers McMullen*, and Kevin Smith's *Clerks* is making the job of low-budget line producers very difficult these days.

Line producers know an important fact that neophyte directors and investors haven't figured out yet: the publicized production costs of "no-budget" movies are rarely accurate. I don't think the general public has ever seen a "no-budget" movie, at least not in a movie theater.

In various articles and interviews, for instance, the budget of *The Brothers McMullen* is quoted as being between $17,000 and $30,000. It's good that this has sent a new breed of investors scurrying to their mattresses in order to finance The Next Indie Hit, but they should know what they're getting for their inheritances: When *Brothers McMullen* director Ed Burns was finally pinned down about what five digits got him, he said he got a rough cut for under $30,000, *not counting what he paid the cast, the crew, and the lab!*

The $7,000 *El Mariachi*, a film whose price tag became its news hook, existed only on video and had a terrible soundtrack. At seven grand, it was not meant to be projected for a discriminating audience. According to an executive I spoke to at Sony Pictures Classics, the *El Mariachi* Columbia released was probably at least $300,000, and Fox Searchlight's *Brothers McMullen* was more like $500,000.

Once a film gets a distributor, it graduates from no-budget to low-budget. That's great for the film, but the trend not to tell the public about the influx of finishing funds after a project is picked up creates a problem for line producers of other "no-budget" movies. Having to explain to investors why $30,000 didn't even get them in the vicinity of a release print and why there are still some hefty bills outstanding can be very frustrating. On occasion, it can be career threatening.

Even worse is having to explain this to one's peers—that is, the writers and directors who make one suffer the feeling of censure when they are told their script cannot be made for under a half-million dollars.

The following message was recently posted on the Internet news group alt.movies.independent:

> As a production manager of low-budget films, I often work with writer/directors new to the business. Part of my job always seems to be to disabuse them of the items they hear about low- and no-budget films that have done well....
>
> My problem is that I now have someone going on about *My Life's in Turnaround*, and I don't know the background stories. Does anyone know the budget? How much to get it in the can?...
>
> Anyone with any info, please let me know. I need ammo to explain how their movie differs from the one I'm working on.

All this line producer has to do is compare storylines. Anyone who does this will find that "no-budget" movies were written to be made for no money; they cannot be made out of just any script. And despite the substantial finishing funds lavished on *El Mariachi*, *Clerks*, and *The Brothers McMullen*, the scripts of these films provide good examples of how to write a cheap film.

Here, then, are a few elements in a script that could make a difference:

The Cast of Characters

Even if the actors are working for free, a film's budget and the size of its crew grow commensurately with the size of its cast. You want to make a no-budget film about a kooky basketball team? Think again. Day after day, at least five people will have to be made up, dressed, lit, staged, and then covered in wide shots and close-ups.

If you study our albatross/models, you'll find that *El Mariachi*, *The Brothers McMullen*, *Clerks*, and *My Life's in Turnaround* usually had no more than two or three people in each scene. When more were involved, the staging was kept to a minimum. Burns's family scenes, for instance, mostly took place with the group all seated around a dinner table. These decisions all cut down on staging time.

Logistically, it is easier to deal with just a couple of actors each day. Members of a large troupe might not be such good sports about having no area



in which to wait or be dressed and made-up. If the actors are all doing their own make-up and hair, don't assume they're going to show up on the set ready for their close-ups. A place to get ready and rudimentary accouterments must be provided. Two or three actors doing their own make-up can be supervised by the director or DP. More than that, and you might have to hire a make-up artist for consistency and efficiency. With five, six, or more characters in your screenplay, you better start thinking about a wardrobe person to keep track of costumes, doubles, continuity, and where Phillip left his fedora.

Next, let's not overlook the physics of illumination. A group of people must be lit with larger or more numerous instruments than what's needed for one or two actors. More and bigger lights require more and bigger diffusers, gels, flags, and grips. Granted, C-stands come in only one size, but you'll still need more of them as well. *Ka-ching.*

In addition, staging takes time, and coverage takes time and film. You don't need a calculator to realize that the number of characters in a scene will directly affect how long and how much you shoot.

Take *My Life's in Turnaround* and *Rhythm Thief* as good examples. Not counting a few cameos, *My Life's in Turnaround* has only five characters (two of whom are codirectors Eric Schaeffer and Donal Lardner Ward). Since it took 15 days to shoot, that means about six or seven pages a day—very difficult, but doable if most scenes have no more than a wide shot and two or three close-ups. Four characters in a scene will take a third more time and film to cover than three characters.

The overall tone Matthew Harrison captured in *Rhythm Thief*, with its bewitchingly fluid, single-shot coverage, would have been very different with more than one or two characters populating each scene. The logistics of a higher profile shoot may not have been manageable on the streets of New York, and the artful balance Harrison struck between form and content might have been compromised. Finally, the use of fewer characters in a scene reduces the amount of time and film stock required to re-shoot bloopers.

Write a No-Budget Film

Even if the actors are working for free, a film's budget and the size of its crew grow commensurately with the size of its cast. You want to make a no-budget film about a kooky basketball team? Think again.

Small Creatures

A writer committed to no-budget filmmaking should assume the same attitude W.C. Fields had toward children and animals: try to avoid them. Depending on the state or county, minors could entail some costly requirements, such as a limit to the number of hours that can be legally shot at one time and in one day; no late-night shooting; a paid social worker on the set whenever a rug-rat is present; and a quiet, well-lit space for them to rest and, on school days, to study.

Animals require animal-trainers on the payroll (and most trainers are Teamsters) and reams of film trying to get Lassie to act like there aren't a bunch of filmmakers watching her.

Pare Down the Multitudes

Extras cost extra: That's how they derived their name. Try to avoid locations that will require a lot of extras or policing the gawkers. A no-budget production cannot afford extra bodies on board just for atmosphere, let alone hire crew to act as logisticians and traffic cops. Plus, more bodies and staff asking citizens not to stare into the camera could attract attention, and attention could mean paying for permits and maybe even for real cops.

What's more, common decency requires that everyone working on a film be fed. I shot a film once in which the extras were supposed to go



FOUR'S A CROWD when it comes to staging. To keep things simple in *The Brothers McMullen*, director Ed Burns often put his characters around a table when there were more than two people in a scene.

Courtesy Fox Searchlight Pictures

out and buy their own meals at lunchtime. No one figured that these people would hang around and watch the crew eat, but that's just what they did. Some extras horrified even the grips by looking for leftovers after everyone was done eating. From then on, it was craft services and lunch for four times as many people as on day one.

Extras cost extra: That's how they derived their name.

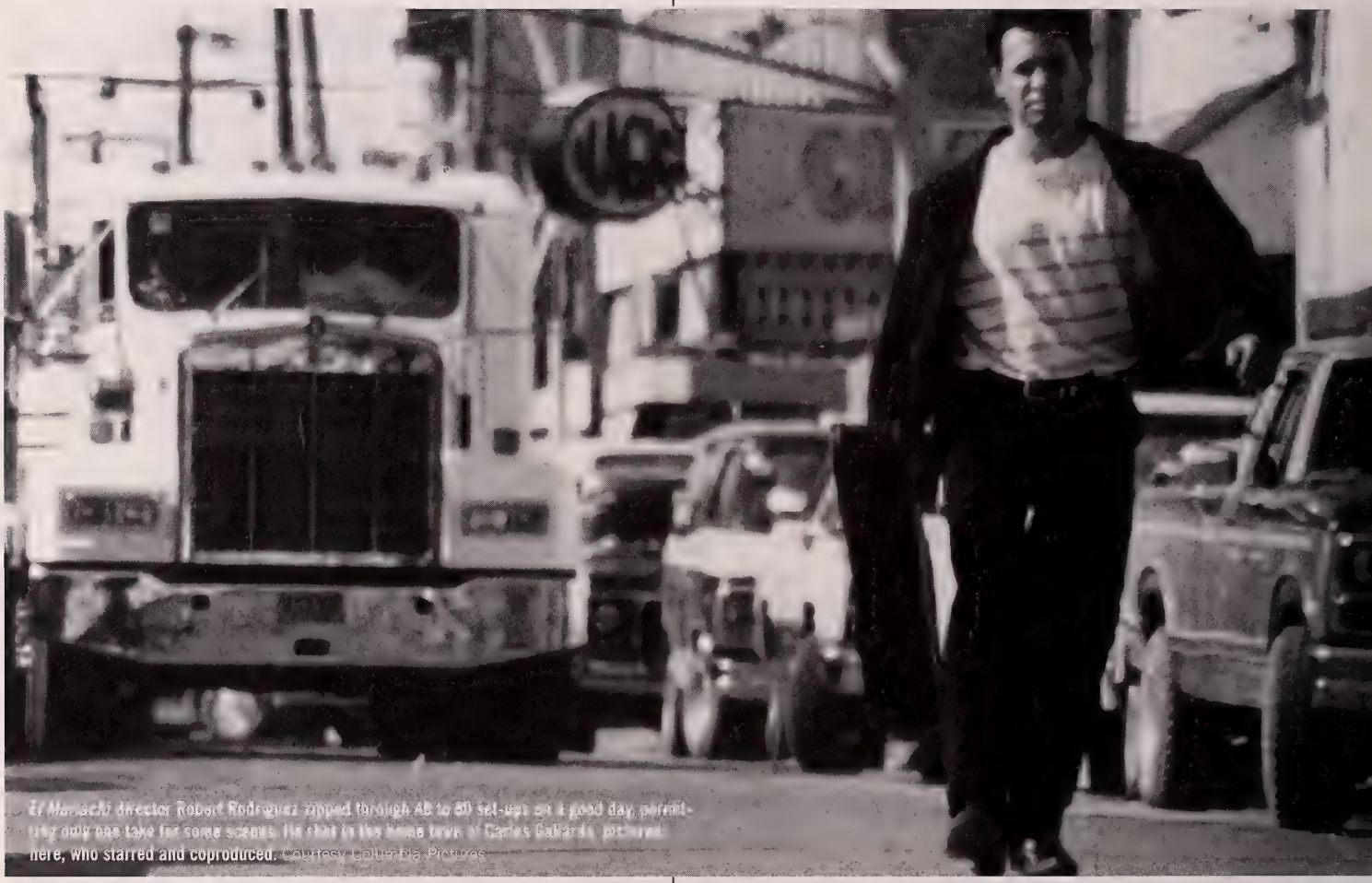
Location, location, location

Keep the number down and keep them simple. The first set-up at any new location takes about three times as long as every set-up that follows. Therefore, avoid short sequences that take less than a day to shoot in any given location.

A crew that's clicking can average 20 to 30 set-ups a day. A wide shot and two close-ups would be three set-ups, for instance. For *El Mariachi*, Robert Rodriguez could get off as many as 40 to 60 set-ups on some days. That and a dollar, however, couldn't get him a *cerveza* if he wrote scripts that made the crew move to a new cantina every 10 or 15 setups.

Intelligent location scouting can lump multiple sets into single locations, but the script can either enable or prohibit this. Steve Chbosky broke a lot of rules making his *Four Corners of Nowhere*, which will be released this September, but the one he followed in this regard saved him a lot of money. His script was carefully written with specific groups of locations in mind, so that the company moved only every three or four days. What's more, there was always a place to shoot day exteriors nearby while the crew lit interiors.

Locations that aren't free or cannot be stolen could be unaffordable to a no-budget production. Permits, cops, fire marshals, additional insurance—these all add to the budget. Therefore, complex scenes at professional sports events, airports, hospitals, and in or near police stations should definitely be avoided. Even if free, apartments are difficult because permission must be obtained from the building owner *and* all of the building's tenants. Cables running through the hallways, craft services in the lobby, additional vehicles in the parking lot, and noise are going to require everybody's cooperation. Depending on how jaded the community is where you're shooting, this could mean payoffs.



El Mariachi director Robert Rodriguez zipped through 40 to 60 set-ups on a good day, primarily only one take for some scenes. He shot in the home town of Carlos Gallardo, pictured here, who starred and coproduced. Courtesy Columbia Pictures

On the other hand, scenes in suburban homes, country side- roads, rural parks, abandoned warehouses, uncrowded bars, and well-known crack houses are not usually interrupted by authorities requiring filmmakers to show their shooting permits.

Try to write locations into the script where crew members are well-known. Chbosky wrote his script with Ann Arbor, Michigan, in mind. He and his cast were not only known there, they were liked. Merchants, citizens, and the police were extremely cooperative. What's more, they knew the film was about their community, and they liked that. Chbosky paid for very few locations.

Kevin Smith was a clerk in the New Jersey convenience store featured in *Clerks*. Ed Burns shot most of his film in his parents' home (and what mother would charge her kid to feed his friends?). The coproducer/star of *El Mariachi*, Carlos Gallardo, lived in the tiny town that was shot up. It's not always smooth sailing and it's possible that your friends or relatives lending their homes will never speak to you again, but you'll come in under budget.



Brian O'Halloran (l) and Jeff Anderson in *Clerks*, a model of ecomony in staging and its attendant costs. Courtesy Miramax

The Four Seasons

If you're paying for your movie with credit cards and trying to keep the interest down, you'd better hurry up and finish shooting, so you can sell the film. This is hard to do if story points hinge on multiple seasons. Another thing to avoid is effects like rain or snow. Extreme elements are time-consuming to shoot in, probably will not look as severe as the crew is experiencing, and are expensive to fake or enhance. Conversely, if the whole film takes place outside on a single sunny afternoon, you're asking for trouble; it could take three weeks to shoot the movie, and it's unlikely that every day will be sunny.

Scenes in suburban homes, country side-roads, rural parks, abandoned warehouses, uncrowded bars, and well-known crack houses are not usually interrupted by authorities requiring filmmakers to show their shooting permits.

Dialogue

If you think your film might have to get made with nonprofessional actors, try to keep their lines short and sweet. Rodriguez claims this was one of the secrets of *El Mariachi*'s success. *The Four Corners of Nowhere*, on the other hand, uses very long blocks of wonderful dialogue but severely (though effectively) limits the staging. This was also true of *Clerks*. Standing behind check-out counters the way they did, Kevin Smith's actors/friends could have done most of the film in their boxer shorts.

Cheating's Allowed

You can cheat in a couple of the areas outlined above—most of the films cited here did—but not in all of them, and you have to make up for it in others. *El Mariachi* had extensive stunts and special effects (something most no-budget films avoid altogether), but Rodriguez paid for the extra film this requires by permitting the actors only single takes in the dramatic scenes. Chbosky wrote in 26 speaking parts, but rarely showed more than two or three people on-screen at a time.

Marketing

Selling your film and assuring a profit starts with the writing. There are formulas for how much money certain types of stories and characters will make at the box office. Research this carefully before you start writing and then make sure the film you write can be made for one-fourth or one-fifth of what similar films made at the box office. Happy hunting and pecking.

Robert Dardon is a filmmaker and runs the Independent Filmmaker's Forum, an online information system in Los Angeles (indie@indiefilm.com).

Next month: The promise and pitfalls of credit card films.



The Four Corners of Nowhere director Steve Chbosky (seated, center) wrote his script with specific locations in mind and always had a place nearby to shoot exteriors while the crew was lighting interiors. Courtesy American Platypus

A BRIGHT NEW DAY: *Why a 25-year-old*

The nineties are a time of good news and bad. As production costs decline, more independent work is getting made. But niche distributors are becoming an endangered species, the victims of cutbacks and buy-outs. More and more, mediamakers are looking for alternative routes to audiences, from self-distribution to cooperative ventures. One of the most instructive models is New Day Films, the distribution co-op which, at age 25, has had time to learn the ropes.

BY ARLENE GOLDBARD & DON ADAMS

AS A KID IN SCHOOL, DID YOU EVER PARTICIPATE IN ONE OF THOSE JUNIOR-government projects—a model UN, a mock U.S. Congress, Girls' State—designed to teach you how to grapple with the problems of democratic governance? Our teachers weren't kidding all those years ago when they told us that government was complicated. In many ways, New Day Films, a distribution co-operative of independent documentary filmmakers, is like a small government, with its own constitution, customs, and culture. It's also one of the most interesting and successful of self-made media organizations formed over the past 25 years.

Founded in 1971, New Day has enabled its members to reach targeted audiences that larger or commercial distributors would not bother pursuing. In essence, each New Day member is an individual self-distributor. Outside of New Day, they handle sales of their social-issue documentaries to television, foreign markets, and home video markets. But in the educational market—schools, libraries, community groups—they pool their resources and work together to help the whole collection reach audiences. New Day publishes an annual catalog, conducts promotional mailings, purchases centralized booking and tape-duplication services, and its members share skills and information about production and distribution. Most active members (currently numbering 36, plus 19 others with older titles in a special membership category called "Classics") come together each June for several days of presentations, business decisions, screenings of prospective members' titles, and socializing. A smaller Steering Committee, New Day's elected governing group, meets mid-year to take care of business between the annual get-togethers.

The Annual Members' Meeting is the highlight and centerpiece of New Day's year: members analyze market trends and make plans for the several joint promotional mailings they'll carry out during the coming year. They review their working relationships with vendors (such as the co-op's booking and shipping service) and make adjustments as needed. They listen to presentations about topics of interests; last year's highlighted the World Wide Web, CD-ROM publishing, and Hi8 production.

One of the most important responsibilities is choosing new co-op members. Any independent maker with a social-issue documentary and a willingness to work on distribution may apply to New Day. Although applications can be sent anytime, most arrive in the late spring, after New Day members have scouted the National Educational Media Network market, held in May, and other likely sources of new recruits. Admission is a two-part process; because accepting a new title almost always means accepting a new member, the person is considered as important as the film. Applicants' tapes are screened by the members, then discussed. The maker of a work that seems promising is interviewed by a few New Day members to make sure that person really understands what's involved in self-distributing and to gauge how well he or she might work with the group.

We know a lot about New Day because we have facilitated all its meetings since 1984. It's been a fascinating experience: having no stake in the decisions being made, we've been able to observe and understand all that goes into them—and to follow the organization's learning curve over the past dozen years.

That learning curve has sometimes been bumpy. According to founding member and recent Steering Committee Chair Jim Klein (coproducer with Julia Reichert of New Day titles *Growing Up Female*, *Union Maids*, and *Seeing Red*, and producer of *Letter to the Next Generation*), New Day's



ABOVE: The original New Day members (clockwise from bottom) Liane Brandon, Amalie Rothschild, Julia Reichert, Jim Klein, Joyce Chopra, Claudia Weill.

RIGHT: From *Twitch and Shout*, by New Day newcomer Laurel Chiten, about the genetic disorder Tourette Syndrome.

All photos courtesy New Day Films

founders started off trying to operate on absolute consensus: every mailing list, promotional piece, and new member had to have unanimous approval.

"We used to meet in a member's house for four or five straight days and decide everything together," Klein recalls. "By the time we had half a dozen members, it took hours of pleading, tearing our hair out, to get one holdout to say, 'Well, I disagree, but I guess I'll go along with all the rest of you.'

"You get close when you're dealing on that level, but when we grew to a dozen members, we found ourselves at a total impasse. Decisions took forever, and sometimes it was just impossible to make one. We started out agreeing to allow decisions even when one person took exception. Then we moved to needing a two-thirds majority, but always with the caveat that we would seek consensus first and only vote when we couldn't reach a consensus."

Today, all of the co-op's decisions are democratic, the product of 25 years of trying to balance feminist values of equality, participation, and sharing with the considerations of market and technology that affect all distributors. The principle of full disclosure still obtains: every member knows where every dollar goes and where each buck stops. Jenny Cool, one of New Day's newest members, whose *Home Economics: A Documentary of Suburbia* was one of three New Day titles on *P.O.V.* last year, says, "I'm amazed that forty people have a meeting in which democracy actually occurs and organization happens. I used to ask myself if this was possible. But New Day has helped me to see what you can do. Given the way Congress is behaving, they should try it."

New Day is not a nonprofit, so, with the exception of a couple of small grants from National Video Resources for special marketing studies, it has received no contributed income from foundations or public arts agencies, like the National Endowment for the Arts. It has always been supported entirely by its members, which brings an instructive gravity to their economic deliberations. Rather than operating on a straight royalty basis, with makers receiving the typical 20 to 25 percent of their gross receipts, New Day's active members pay a monthly share of the co-op's expenses, then receive the entire balance of their receipts as royalties. ("Classics" members pay 20 percent of any income when their titles do business.) People pay their share according to a sliding scale, which changes every half-year as members' fortunes change; but right now, the member whose titles are grossing the most pays about seven percent of the co-op's overhead—$384 a month—and gets to keep 80.5 percent of those titles' gross receipts. At the bottom of the share ladder are new members whose titles haven't earned any income yet, each paying a minimum share of $55 per month. On average (not counting those new members), New Day's active members retain a royalty of 67 percent of their titles' grosses, upending the usual distribution arrangement. Not all this money goes directly into the producer's pocket: most members do some extra individual promotion—usually mailing inexpensive brochures to targeted lists of media buyers—and many have offices or part-time staff to support.

Distribution Co-op Could be the Wave of the Future





SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW (clockwise from below): ***Woo Who? May Wilson,*** **by Amalie Rothschild, about a grandmother-cum-underground-artist, is one of the "Classics" in the New Day catalog.** ***Seeing Red,*** **New Day founders Jim Klein and Julia Reichart's portrait of the American Communist Party, is still in circulation.** ***Home Economics: A Documentary of Suburbia*** **by Jenny Cool, one of New Day's newest members.**

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CO-OP WASN'T ALWAYS SO AFFORDABLE. AT ITS HEIGHT, before the VHS "revolution" completely changed the economics of educational distribution, New Day's Manhattan office employed an operations manager, a booker, and a shipper, and one point on the share ladder—one percent of the co-op's overhead—equaled $117. New Day has pared its overhead by well over half in the past few years, replacing its own administrative offices and fulfillment operation with services purchased from Transit Media, a family-run operation in Hohokus, New Jersey.

The economic shakedown of the independent media world in the past decade supplies the reasons behind this budget-cutting. Until about 10 years ago, schools and libraries around the country routinely spent hundreds of dollars to purchase a 16mm film, sometimes only vaguely curriculum-related. Many independent filmmakers could support themselves on distribution income alone. For instance, long-time New Day member Debra Franco (now the head of Copperfield Associates, a media consulting company) and her partner Skip Shepherd made two films on adolescent sexuality, *Dear Diary* and *Am I Normal?*, which together grossed hundreds of thousands of dollars in the 1980s. In New Day's 1987 catalog, 16mm copies of these 25-minute films were priced at $425 (VHS at $395). Still in active distribution today, almost all sales of these titles are on VHS, advertised in the catalog at $189 and often discounted as part of special promotions. Multiply this story by a few dozen New Day members, and the economic shift in distribution is abundantly clear.

There was a period during the eighties when New Day's membership was split: some wanted to focus on money-making and opposed accepting new titles without promising markets. Others emphasized the co-op's value as a network and support group and wanted to bring in titles with small but socially significant markets. A few new members joined expecting to equal the grosses of the pre-VHS period and were bitterly disappointed. Members grew reluctant to bring in any new titles at all, not wanting to repeat that experience. But in the end, everyone agreed that the co-op's value went far beyond grosses and royalties, and membership began growing again.

"The days are gone," says Ralph Arlyck (*An Acquired Taste*, *Godzilla Meets Mona Lisa*, and *Current Events*), "when you can really make a lot of money with educational distribution. The best thing about being in New Day is the wonderful group of people. The things you learn from them! I'm sometimes not aware of the things I've learned from New Day until I catch myself telling them to other people—how to work with people, how to hire someone; it's not restricted to distribution. They've been so valuable."

Camaraderie and support are vital, but so is affordability. The share system became the object of intense scrutiny early in our experience with New Day, bringing two different truths into collision. People at the top of the share ladder complained, "I pay thousands of dollars each year, and I have to spend a lot of other money to bring in all this sale and rental income. The people at the bottom of the share ladder are getting a free ride at my expense." But those at the bottom argued back: "You may be paying out thousands, but you're still earning thousands. It's only costing you 20 percent of your gross to be in the co-op, and you're the ones that use all the services. My share equals 80 percent of my gross, and by the time you add in my other expenses, it's costing me money. Percentage-wise, I'm carrying you."

On this and two subsequent occasions in the past decade, New Day members undertook meticulous studies of the economic impact of various alternatives to their share system—switching to a fee-for-service basis, for instance, or charging members an equal straight percentage of gross incomes as other distributors do. Some minor adjustments were made, but over and over again, a conscientious examination of the facts and a recognition that it was important to keep certain titles in distribution whether or not they succeeded in earning money brought the group to reaffirm the system that had evolved over 20 or so years of practical application.

People without a taste for group process might find this trying, but for Arlyck, it's one of New Day's advantages: "New Day offers a filtering process: a bunch of smart people who can figure things out, talk about them, bring in outside expertise when it's needed. There's no guarantee. You can still make a wrong decision. But it's a lot less likely to happen when you have twenty people thinking and talking about it—and when a group's been doing that for twenty-five years."





Today, budget cuts have eliminated most controversy about the share system. Individual members' shares of the stripped-down operation have become so much smaller that almost everyone finds them affordable; thus, there's no pressing need to change the system. And no one in New Day or elsewhere in the indie distribution field can make it on distribution proceeds alone. Some teach, some make media for hire, some have secured production grants that underwrite part of their time and overhead, and some have day jobs in other fields. When asked why they belong to the co-op now, New Day members mention fair accounting, prompt payment, and other advantages of owning your own distribution company. But they talk mostly about non-monetary compensations.

"Connection with other makers is the primary reason to be in New Day," says J. Clements (*Dear Lisa* and *Man Oh Man*). "New Day really taught me about dealing with people. It also gave me a sense that I could be a leader, and I never thought of myself like that before."

To keep New Day's overhead cost low and participation high, members share the work of operating the co-op and promoting its collection. Essential skills are passed down through the "generations," so that as older members go on to new productions, newer members can carry forward their tasks. People tend to cycle through New Day, alternating periods of active participation with times of pulling back: a member may perform a fairly taxing task for a few years, then teach it to a newer member and take on something relatively light for a while. A few years down the line, when the older member has a new title to distribute, the process will be reversed. Next to money, the task-performance requirement has been one of the touchiest of New Day's policies It's a human problem: some people are ardent task performers, ready to take on such time-consuming tasks as producing the annual catalog, heading the Recruitment Committee, acting as budget director or task coordinator, or chairing the Steering Committee. Others follow the time-honored strategy for escaping responsibility: accept it reluctantly, fulfill it inadequately, and stonewall any criticism. The vast majority fall somewhere in between. The group is more inclined to wire around members who are poor task performers than to invest a lot of time riding herd on them. But conscientious members resent it when others let the co-op down, feeling penalized for their good behavior. Governments the world over exercise their authority through a combination of coercion and consent; in theory, democracy emphasizes the consent half of the equation, but in the real world, coercion counts. How many of us would pay income taxes if there were no penalty for not doing so? So part of New Day's "constitution," enshrined in a document called "General Policies," is a system of fines levied against those who fail to keep their commitments. Fines aren't used very often, but they are a clear deterrent.

Some of the most important issues facing New Day are common to all independent distributors: technological, economic, and political change. New Day has had as much trouble as any other distributor in anticipating the next move. But because there's no conflict between the economic interests of the company as a whole and that of the mem-

bers, New Day's approach has been marked by a real willingness to experiment and take risks: computerized mailing lists when others were still using addressographs; computerized ordering and fulfillment when others were still doing their business manually. Missteps have almost always involved contracting with someone's family member to perform a service that could have been provided more effectively—and with less emotional turmoil—by a professional. As Klein says, "New Day had the advantage of experimenting at a fat time for the independent field, so we could afford to make mistakes."

Today, the emphasis on experimentation continues, but always with an eye to the bottom line. At the 1995 annual meeting, the co-op decided to require all members to have e-mail, making communication easier and more efficient. Ellen Frankenstein (*Miles from the Border* and *A Matter of Respect*) says, "New Day gave me permission as a filmmaker not to be in the city. It's such a strong network, especially now that we're all on e-mail, it works for me to be in Alaska." To celebrate its 25th anniversary, New Day is inaugurating a Web site this month, putting its catalog online and giving media users and prospective co-op members instant access to reviews, study guides, and other information and a way to communicate directly with makers. The Web site is the brainchild of New Day member Jenny Cool, whose day job is in computer multimedia.



From *Becoming American,* by Ken and Ivory Waterworth Levine, about a Hmong refugee family from Laos resettling in the U.S.

For many New Day members, the deciding factor in joining New Day rather than going to a conventional distributor was the reason that inspired the co-op's founding: making sure their work reached its intended audiences. As Klein tells it, "When [Julia Reichert and I] started out, we didn't intend to be distributors." After the two made *Growing Up Female* and brought it to New York, they found it a hard sell; no one was interested in social-issue films, particularly about women. The few people that were interested couldn't—or wouldn't—reach the audiences Klein and Reichert had in mind, like women's groups.

"Grove Press had a distribution division and took us to lunch in the Village—the guy was charming as hell. But when we said it was important to reach the women's movement, he said political movements don't have money to rent films. He said 'We're a business. We don't give things away.' So we had no choice: to reach audiences, we had to get involved in distribution. People told us 'You're crazy, you don't know anything about business,' and we just said 'To hell with that, we'll do it anyway,'" and New Day was born as a team, if not a full-fledged organization.

In 1971, Klein and Reichert met Amalie Rothschild (*It Happens To Us*) at a Robert Flaherty Film Seminar where some early feminist films were screened, and found they had a lot in common. The following year, at the First International Festival of Women's Films, Klein, Reichert, and Rothschild saw a film by Liane Brandon (*Anything You Want To Be*) that made them rush right out and call her. These four pioneering makers are recognized as New Day's official founders.

More than 20 years later, Jenny Cool found herself thinking along the same "I'll do it anyway" lines: "I came into New Day with my thesis film in visual anthropology from the University of Southern California [*Home Economics,* about the American dream of suburban home ownership]. I found out about New Day at the National Educational Film and Video Festival [now called the National Educational Media Network]. I was nervous at first. Self-distribution seemed like a lot of work: would I have the time? But then I realized I'm the only one who can really rep and handle my film."

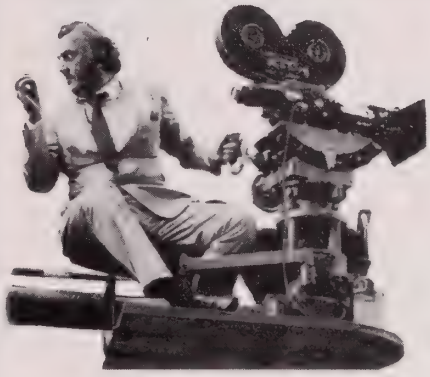
Debra Franco, whose consulting career has given her an impressive overview of educational distribution, agrees: "From my perspective today as a consultant and analyst in the field of noncommercial media, fewer distributors are going to put out the time and effort necessary to strategize and target the marketing of a film that doesn't have a huge market. Markets are so much more niched and fragmented now, each film needs its own strategy. Most films won't find anyone to do that for them because the monetary rewards are so slim. For a young person today who wants to be an independent filmmaker and wants that kind of support and connection, New Day would be a great place."

IS NEW DAY REPLICABLE? "I don't know," says Klein. "There's a similar climate now to when New Day started, an exciting explosion of affordable new media. New Day could be a model: it's efficient, low-cost, has developed a workable structure and governance. But this is a troubling time to rebuild. The business environment is hostile. I don't know if I'd start all over again." Jenny Cool thinks it's worth considering. "I don't know how translatable it is," she says, "because it takes a hell of a lot of work, but it would behoove people in any medium to look at New Day and learn from it. It's a model of having a small central operation and having most stuff diffused through people as their individual responsibilities. More and more, people have to piece together their livings on their own. How can you nurture the creative side and pay the bills, work at home? You need a support organization to help you get your work out."

To request a catalog, contact: New Day Films, 22-D Hollywood Ave., Hohokus, NJ 07423; (201) 652-6590; TMCNDY@aol.com. For membership information, contact: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; (914) 485 8489; Raarlyck@vassar.edu. New Web address: http://www.newday.com.

Arlene Goldbard and Don Adams (goldbard@pacific.net) are writers and partners in Adams & Goldbard, an organizational and cultural development consulting firm based in Ukiah, California.

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Cue & A

With Will Parrinello



Will Parrinello is coproducer of Little Italy, *a 60-minute documentary on Italian American life in San Francisco and New York City. In trying to get his film carried on public television, Parrinello learned a thing or two about how the system works. As he relates here, a service like Boston-based American Program Service (APS), which nationally syndicates programs to public television stations, presents a number of advantages over dealing directly with PBS.* Little Italy, *which aired on WLIW-Long Island in March, is being rolled out on PBS stations through the fall.*

Q: What happened with PBS?

A: The PBS Cultural Programming Department was interested in the program but they didn't have a budget per se. What happened to us—and what typically happens to a stand-alone program—is that PBS will say, 'We're interested, but you need to raise $30,000 in underwriting costs for the step-up to PBS'—that means duplication costs and advertising.

Q: How did you come to work with American Program Service?

A: My partner John Antonelli and I told PBS we can't raise that money. The hard cost of the film was only $20,000. Greg Swartz [the program's executive producer at KQED-San Francisco] had given us an on-line edit, sound design, and sound mix in exchange for the local rights. It's a huge thing, because not one station would pay for more than a couple thousand, and those postproduction costs can run between $40,000-$70,000 on the market. It was a huge boost of confidence.

After PBS's rejection, Swartz said, 'Let's go to APS.' The great thing about APS is they exist to help these one-shot programs or "controversial" series. They then syndicate the program. They have a quarterly meeting with the PBS station directors and show them clips.

APS is real good about telling you in advance how many stations they'll be able to sell to and how much money they'll be able to bring in. Their initial estimate was 10 stations, and they said they could probably get 20. After the initial offering we had 10 stations pick the program up, including WLIW, WNET-New York City, WHYY-Philadelphia—all major markets on the East Coast. I feel confident we'll get the top 20 to 30 markets. The contracts are for four broadcasts over two years.

Because they give conservative estimates, they have a good reputation. They don't overstate the facts. APS said we'd get $10,000 in the first offering and $20,000 would trickle in after.

Q: How much did you have to pay APS?

A: Unless you're picked up by *American Experience* or *P.O.V.*, which this show wasn't appropriate for, APS does not charge you per se. They take a 20 percent fee from money they bring in, but they don't take money up-front [like PBS]. It's a great route if you don't get picked up by *P.O.V.* or PBS. APS is a breath of fresh air, because they charge a fair amount for the work they do.

Q: How is the roll-out different on APS?

A: The roll-out is station-by-station. But even if PBS had picked it up, it wouldn't have been a "hard feed," where stations must show it; it would have been a "soft feed," where stations could show it whenever they wanted. And PBS wouldn't have spent a lot on publicity. A national broadcast would've been good for us, but if it's not a hard feed, they don't put time and effort into it, because it's an orphan, a stand-alone. We might have begged and borrowed for the $30,000 for PBS, but it would have made no sense from a business standpoint.

Q: After lining up the first 10 stations, how did you proceed?

A: Phase two was getting those on the fence to take it. We contacted programmers individually to find out what they thought of it. You can't do a hard sell, but you can establish a relationship. We had a positive response from the Italian American community, and talking that through with program directors—like the fact that there are huge Italian communities in St. Louis, Detroit, Omaha, the Carolinas—helps.

The word is just starting to come in: the New Jersey station did not take it initially, but have since taken an interest. Rhode Island is interested; Chicago wasn't initially, but they are now. People take interest when you call and give more background info on demographics.

We're in phase three now: those who don't have the money are watching to see how it does in other markets. It's almost unspoken—some are seeing how the ratings go. Some are using it as a pledge tool, like WLIW.

Q: Have you worked with APS in the past?

A: Yes, they have a "program exchange"—if they think a program won't sell well, you can offer it for free. We did that with two films that were paid for by corporate underwriters [*Sumo Basho* and *Yen for Baseball*]. Since we were sure that APS would deliver them, [corporations] funded them. It's a way to get something funded when you're near completion. And we got extensive coverage: *Sumo* got 40 or 50 stations and *Yen* about 80 stations. We were also able to set up relationships with individual program directors. It's like publicity, in a sense.

APS, 120 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116; (617) 338-4455; fax: 338-5369; Alan Foster, v.p. national syndication; Gene Nichols, v.p. program exchange.

—Tomio Geron



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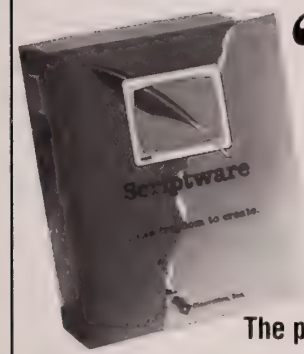
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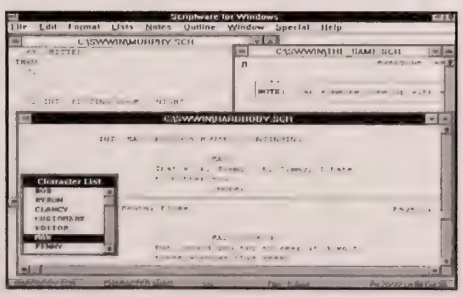
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By Kathryn Bowser

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Domestic

ALBANY INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, October 17-20, NY. Major goal of competitive fest is to promote short subject motion picture & ind filmmakers throughout world. Programming committee considers films of any genre or style, incl. fiction, doc, live action, animation. Entries must be 45 min. or less. Offical competition cats incl. World Competition, N. American Competition & Int'l Creative Awards. All winning films screened for press, industry & public in NYC as Third Annual Award Winning Shorts. Following its NYC run, AWS promoted int'ly for nontheatrical venues (rental fees paid). Entry fee: $30. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" only. Deadline: July 5. Contact Michael D. Ellenbogen, president, Passport Cinemas, 542 Yates St., Albany, NY 12208; (518) 453-1000; fax 453-1350; WWW.PASS.CINE.Com; aisfr@pass-cine.com.

AUSTIN HEART OF FILM FESTIVAL, October10-13, TX. This is only fest devoted to recognizing writer's contribution to motion picture & TV industry w/ annual screenplay & film competition. Screenplay competition judged by panel of industry professionals. Cats & prizes: adult/mature themes (feature length)—$3000 in prizes, round trip airfare, accomodation & fest pass, Bronze AHFF Award, participation in AHFF Mentor Program; children/family theme (feature length)—$3000, participation in AHFF Mentor Program, round trip airfare, fest pass, Bronze AHFF Award; student short (under 30 min.)—$750, round trip airfare, accommodations, fest pass, Bronze AHFF Award. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: June 17. All semi-finalists eligible to attend closed Master Class by visiting fest writer. Film Competition for best written film: winners of feature length, short film & student short all receive Bronze AHFF award, airfare, accommodations & fest pass. Entry fee: $30. Film entry deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Austin Heart of Film Festival, 707 Rio Grande, Suite 101, Austin, TX 78701; (512) 478-4795; fax 478-6205.

BOSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Mid November, MA. Founded in 1988, noncompetitive fest annually presents selection of best contemporary int'l films on Jewish themes & creates forum for discussion w/ visiting film directors, scholars & audience members. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: none. Deadline: early June. Contact: Kaj Wilson, director, Boston Jewish Film Fest, 63 Endicott Street, #503, Boston, MA 02113; (617) 367-6812; fax 367-2533.

BRECKENRIDGE FESTIVAL OF FILM, September 19-22, CO. Now in 16th yr, fest programs 4 days of films, receptions & film education activities at venues throughout community. Approx 40 ind US & int'l films presented from over 300 entries. "Best of Fest" awarded to films in 4 cats: drama, comedy, experimental & doc. Ind films & videos must have been completed or had initial release or telecast between Jan. 1, 1994 & June 30, 1996; training or industrial films not accepted. Fest emphasizes "relaxed atmosphere in which guests are readily accessible to filmgoers" in informal discussion sessions. Lodging & discounts on ground transportation provided for filmmakers during fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $35 plus pre-paid postage. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Julie Bullock, Breckenridge Festival of Film, Box 718, Riverwalk Center, 150 W. Adams, Breckenridge, CO 80424; (970) 453-6200; fax 453-2692; http://www.brecknet.com/bff/home.html.

CENTRAL FLORIDA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Mid September, FL. Competitive fest is dedicated to discovery of new & emerging artists & to "broad use of ind film & video productions as artistic forms of expression"; now in its 14th yr. All entrants receive score sheets & written critiques on works entered. Cash awards & prizes given to winning artists in each cat, as well as Audience & Best of Fest awards. Film & video shorts & features of all formats, genres & cats (incl. animation, doc, experimental, narrative & music video) accepted. No completion date requirements; no commissioned or commercial work accepted. Program also incl. special Florida Filmmakers Showcase & screenings of specific genres. Awards given to top 3 finishers in each cat. Film/video awarded Best of Show receives HammerCam Award, designed by Orlando artist David Cumbie. Individual cash honoraria range from $100-$500. Hotel accommodations for 2 nights provided to each winning filmmaker attending fest. Screenings held at Orlando Museum of Art & other local venues. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" 1/2", S-8, Beta, 8mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $15-35, depending on length. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Brenda Joyner, director, Central Florida Film & Video Fest, 15 1/2 N. Enola Drive, #5, Orlando, FL 32801; (407) 839-6045; fax 839-6045; amy@sundial.net.

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Mid October, IL. Sponsored by Facets Multi-Media, non-profit multi-arts org, competitive fest, founded in 1982, programs entertainment films, videos & TV programs directed toward children ages 6-14. Largest competitive fest of children's films in US. About 200 films & videos from over 25 countries presented annually, augmented by special hands-on creative workshops & activities. Films judged by Adult Jury & 50-member Children's Jury. Entries must be humanistic, nonexploitative, nonviolent, speak to culturally diverse audiences & contribute to broader understanding of global culture. Cats incl. feature-length live action (over 60 min.), feature animation, short live action (under 60 min.), short animation, video single program, video series, special jury awards. Awards: Children's Jury Best of Fest, Best Live Action & Animation Features, Best Live Action & Animation Shorts, Liv Ullman Peace Prize, Fest Award for Intercultural Understanding, Most Popular Film of Fest, Most Popular Video of Fest, Rights of Child Award (selected by UNICEF). Extensive local press coverage. All entries must have been completed in previous 2 yrs & suitable for children under age of 12. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: none. Deadline: early June. Contact: Fest Director, Chicago Int'l Children's Film Fest, 517 W. Fullerton Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614; (312) 261-9075; fax 929-5437.

FESTIVAL CINE LATINO, September 19-22, CA. Fest seeks film & video works that reflect dignity & diversity of Latino, Latin American & Caribbean communities. All film & video works by &/or about Latinos in US as well as works that originate in Latin America & Caribbean are encouraged. This yr fest is especially interested in works that treat subjects of migration/immigration, youth issues, Latin American cultural & ethnic diversity, Latino contributions to US culture & history & Latin American responses to oppression & injustice. Open to all lengths & genres of works completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Works-in-progress not accepted, English subtitles strongly recommended. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $35 (non-members), $10 (members). Deadline: mid June. Contact: Julia Jaurigui, admin director, Fest Cine Latino, Cine Accion, 346 Ninth Street, 2nd Fl, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 553-8135; fax 863-7428.

FILM ARTS FESTIVAL, Early November, CA. Noncompetitive regional showcase for ind works of any length on any subject by No. California film & video artists only. Founded in 1984, fest is sponsored by Film Arts Foundation. Honoraria ($3.50/min.) paid for all works shown that havn't received FAF grants. About 100 films & videos showcased each yr to audiences estimated at over 4,000; intense local coverage & occasional *Variety* coverage. Fest strongly advocates & promotes works to other fests, programmers, broadcasters & distribs. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, S-8, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $5 (early); $10 (final). Deadlines: June 28 (early); July 26 (final). Contact: Mark Taylor, fest director, Film Arts Fest, FAF, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760; fax 552-0882.

GRAVITY FREE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, September 20-21, NY. Formerly part of Lucille Ball Fest of New Comedy, is fest encourages filmmakers to produce comedy shorts of 30 min. or less in any film or video format. Panel narrows field to 4 finalists. Entry fee: $20. Awards: Juror's Award, Popular Pick Award ($250 each) & $250 to each finalist. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Gravity Free Film Fest, 116 E. Third St., Jamestown, NY 14701; (716) 664-2465; fax 661-3829.

HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Early Nov., HI. *When Strangers Meet* is perennial theme of non-competitive fest, showcasing ind works from or about Asian Pacific region which promote cross-cultural understanding among peoples of Asia, Pacific & N. America. Free public screenings are feature of fest, & crowds of over 65,000 attend annually. Discussions, workshops, symposia, special awards & media events w/ filmmakers, scholars, critics & audiences round out program. Held at 10 locations on Oahu, then travels to Molokai, Maui, Kauai & Big Island. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr, produced in Asia, America or Pacific & relate to fest's cross cultural emphasis. All lengths of all genres, incl. experimental, short, doc, feature & animation accepted; fest is interested in presenting Hawaii, US or world premieres. Fest awards Gold Maile Awards for best features that promote cultural understanding among people of Asia, the Pacific & N. America & Silver Maile Awards for Doc, Cinematographer & Vision in Film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $25. Deadline: late June. Contact: Hawaii Int'l Film Fest, 700 Bishop Street, Suite 400, Honolulu, HI 96813; (808) 528-3456; fax 528-1410.

HEARTLAND FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 7-10, IN. Founded in 1991 "to honor filmmakers whose work explores human journey by artistically expressing hope & respect for positive values of life." Fest presents ind screenings, premieres, workshops & special events, culminating in Awards Gala, where filmmakers are honored w/ Crystal Heart Award & portion of $100,000 prize. Feature (over 50 min.) & short (under 50 min.) entries in dramatic, doc & children's (live action &/or animation) cats accepted. Winning films only screened at fest (about 10-15 each yr). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Jeffrey Sparks, artistic dir., Heartland Film Fest, 613 N. East St., Indianapolis, IN 46202; (317) 464-9405; fax 635-4201.

HOT SPRINGS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, October 15-20, AR. Screens submitted docs along with Academy Award nominees in the doc category & IDA Award winners. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, VHS; preview on VHS cassette only. Entry fee: none, but must include a s.a.s.e. w/ sufficient postage for return of preview cassette, or $10 for postage & handling. Deadline: June 15. Contact: HSDFF, 211 Exchange St., Hot Springs, AR 71901; (501) 321-4747; fax 321-0211.

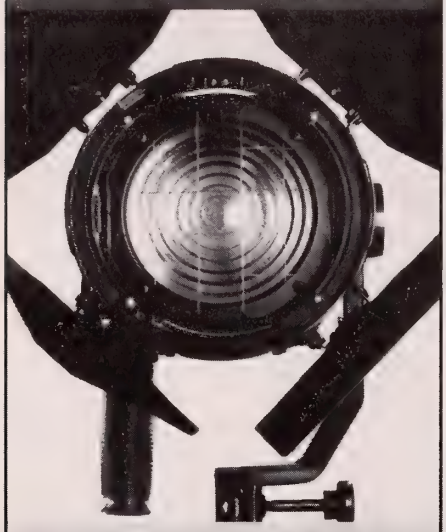
INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET, September 15-22, NY. IFFM, founded in 1979, is only US market devoted to new, emerging ind film talent. It accepts projects in development, outstanding docs & breakthrough films. Open only to industry professionals & filmmaker & screenwriter participants. Over 2,500 filmmakers, distributors, TV & home video buyers, agents, development execs & fest programmers from US & abroad attend. Special market activities incl. seminars, workshops & networking meetings to introduce industry professionals to ind. filmmakers. American fiction or doc films may be entered in any section (priority given to feature-length 35mm & 16mm films). All finished features & shorts submitted to market should have been completed no more than 1 yr before market & should not yet

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FESTIVALS

have distribution. Features should be over 75 min.; limited number of feature length films post-produced & screened on video accepted. Unfinished features seeking financing, finishing funds or distribution also eligible; filmmakers present their projects in 25 min. pitch & view format, screening on 3/4" SP video. Short films should be under 60 min. & are screened on 16mm & 35mm; video shorts cannot receive theatre presentation but are made available for viewing in Video Library . Registered scripts for feature-length films accepted for on-site review & are entered in IFFM catalog, which is valuable resource of yr's ind production in country. All applicants & market pass attendees must currently hold membership in IFP, IFP/West, IFP/Midwest, IFP/North or Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" (for works in progress), 1/2" (for Video Library screenings only). Entry fee: $250-$425, depending on length & submission date. Deadline: May 31 (early); June 21 (final). Contact: Valerie Sheppard, market dir, IFFM, Independent Feature Project, 104 W. 29th St., 12th fl., New York, NY 10001; (212) 465-8200; fax 465-8525.

INDIANA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Late July, IN. Independent film- & videomakers in IN & IL, OH, MI & KY are eligible for fest, which celebrates work of midwestern artists. Juried competition is open to professional, amateur & student film- & videomakers. Winners share over $10,000 in cash awards & prizes, & winners & other entrants eligible for consideration in Spellbound/WFYI-TV20 TV series *Reel Time*. Each winner receives Indy award or Merit certificate. Student finalists eligible for internship opportunities. Cats incl. fiction, doc, experimental, music video & animation. Artists may enter as professional, amateur or student. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $30-$45. Deadline: early June. Contact: Fest Dir, Indiana Film & Video Fest, Indiana Film Society, 820 East 67th St., Indianapolis, IN 46220; (317) 255-2464.

LLANO ESTACADO VIDEO FESTIVAL, Early October, TX. 1st edition of competitive fest was in 1995. No thematic or content restrictions; entries may be narrative, doc, animation, experimental, computer graphics or music videos. Winning entries shown in fall fest & placed in Art History Assoc. archives at TTU. Entries must have been produced on video or computer, up to 15 min. & submitted on 1/2" only. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Roberta Walters, Llano Estacado Video Fest, Art History Association, Dept of Art, Texas Tech University, Box 40281, Lubbock, TX 79409-2081; (806) 742-3825; fax 742-1971.

MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL AND VIDEOFEST, Mid October, CA. Invitational, noncompetitive fest screens American and Int'l films, videos, & CD-ROMs. An "event of int'l scope in an intimate setting," Mill Valley has become a premiere West Coast fest, w/ commitment to bringing new & innovative works in film & video to No. California audiences. Filmmakers, distribs, press & large local audience meet in "atmosphere where professional relationships thrive." All genres of work encouraged. Fest incl. around 100 programs of ind features, docs, shorts & video works, as well as interactive exhibits & seminars. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 mos; industrial, promotional or instructional works not appropriate; premieres & new works emphasized. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, CD-ROM. Entry fee: $20 (early); $25 (final). Deadline: May 31 (early); June 30 (final). Contact: Mill Valley Film Fest & Videofest, Mill Creek Plaza, 38 Miller Avenue, Suite 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256, fax 383-8606; mvff@well.com.

MIX: NEW YORK LESBIAN & GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, November 7-17, NY. MIX is "the largest experimental film fest in the world & the oldest continuous queer film fest in New York," focusing on alternative forms of cinema & electronic media. Fest has premiered & introduced many historic queer films. MIX is also int'l network of queer fests; int'l fests incl. MIX BRASIL: Fest das Manifestacoes da Sexualidade, & MIX MEXICO. About 200 productions each yr. Fest covered by several nat'l publications & all local gay media. Fest uses several guest curators; usually 5-8 guest curated programs/yr. Fest also likes co-gender programs. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8, digital (computer), video installations, audio installations, performance incorporating media. Entry fee: $10 recommended. Deadline: May 30 for curators, June 15 for works. Contact: Shari Frilot, fest director; MIX: New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film/Video Fest, 341 Lafayette Street, #169, New York, NY 10012; (212) 539-1023/501-2309; fax 475-1399; mix@echo.nyc.com; http://www.echonyc.com/~mix.

NEW ENGLAND CHILDREN'S FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Mid November, MA. Estab in 1989, fest is project of Center for Children's Media. Fest showcases diverse selection of outstanding int'l films & videos that both entertain children & challenge creative & intellectual abilities. Competitive cats incl. live action feature, live action short feature (under 45 min.), animation long format, animation short format (under 12 min.), doc/educational, experimental, & UNICEF Award (for film that best illustrates the theme *Rights of the Child*.). Juries comprised of children, parents, educators & media professionals. In addition to "Best of the Fest" awards, fest presents Center for Children's Media Award for most outstanding contribution to children's media & Carpenter Center for Arts at Harvard Univ. presents award for outstanding script or story in educational or narrative form. Entries must be aimed at children ages 3-11 & young people ages 12-16; works about children aimed at adult audiences may not be considered appropriate, incl. films w/ condescending points of view & films w/ unnecessary violence or negative attitudes toward race, sex & age. Entries may not have been distributed theatrically or broadcast on TV in eastern US. Center for Children's Media also organizes touring selection of films from fest program across US; compensation made for use of films in package, which are shown at public theatres, other film fests, & universities. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $20-$50. Deadline: late June. Contact: Cheryl Hirshman, exec dir, New England Children's Film & Video Fest, Center for Children's Media, 28 Woods Road.Medford, MA 02155; (617) 391-4260; fax 730-8393.

NEW YORK EXPOSITION OF SHORT FILM AND VIDEO, November, NY. Showcase for cutting-edge & classic ind shorts accepts animation, doc, experimental & narrative works under 60

min., as well as digital multi-media works of any size. Now in its 30th yr, fest of one of country's longest-running annual fests of short ind film & video. Finalist works screened for public at New School & are seen by distribs & exhibs; selected finalist works tour to other venues. Also features panels & sidebar screening, w/ digital multi-media works presented at an internet cafe. 1st, 2nd & 3rd place awards in each cat, plus Eastman Kodak prizes of film stock. Entries must have been completed since 1994, CD-ROMs since 1992. Student & int'l entries welcome. Formats: 16mm, 3/4" (35mm & S-8 films shown in video projection); preview on 3/4" or 1/2"; CD-ROMs in Mac or PC format. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: July 1. Contact: Robert Withers, dir, New York Expo of Short Film & Video, 532 LaGuardia Pl., Ste. 330, New York, NY 10012; (212) 505-7742; rswbc@cunyvm.cuny.edu.

NORTHAMPTON FILM FESTIVAL, Early November, MA. Film & video productions by estab & emerging Northeast artists are focus of noncompetitive fest. Awards presented for films/tapes selected for screening. Participants invited to be on panels for discussion of work, w/ estab filmmakers, scholars & critics as panel moderators. Cats: animation, narrative (traditional or experimental), doc (traditional or experimental), experimental. No commercial, industrial or promotional works accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $20. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Howard Polonsky, Northampton Film Fest, Northampton Center for the Arts, 17 New South St., Northampton, MA, 01060; (413) 584-7327; fax 582-9014.

REEL AFFIRMATIONS: DC ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF GAY AND LESBIAN FILMS, Mid October, DC. 4th largest gay & lesbian film fest in US, in audience size & number of films screened. Fest accepts films & videos which are by &/or about lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender people. Features, shorts, docs, experimental & animated works accepted; fest encourages entries from women & people of color. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Fest Director, Reel Affirmations: DC Annual Celebration of Gay & Lesbian Films, One in Ten, c/o NPMA, 1555 Connecticut Ave., NW, ste. 200, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 986-1119; fax 462-9043; one.in.ten@glib.org.

ROCHESTER LESBIAN AND GAY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Late October, NY. Now in 4th yr, fest "is seeking work from the Third Coast, an important regional frontier for lesbian & gay media beyond the coastal divide." Open to makers in US & Canada residing w/in 200-mile radius of Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Seaway. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Brad Pease/David Hoffend, Rochester Lesbian & Gay Film & Video Fest, Gay Alliance of the Genessee Valley, 179 Atlantic Ave., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 244-9030; filmfest@aol.com.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Early November, CO. Fest, now in 9th yr, promotes & supports film & video projects by & about women & women's issues. Group of 4-5 producers/directors participate in Producer's Forum. Fiction, nonfiction & animated entries accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: None. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Susan Martz, chair, Rocky Mountain Women's Film Fest, 48 Woodbridge Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80906; (719) 576-7862; fax 576-7346.

TEMECULA VALLEY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 18-22, CA. 2nd annual fest focuses on feature-length romantic comedies. Fest presents 1 Viewer's Choice Award in 3 cats: Best Feature, Best Short, Best Student. Each winner receives cash award & trophy. In short & student cats, fest will consider limited number of productions in genres besides romantic comedy. Ind., low-budget & major studio/distrib entries welcome. Entries must have been completed in prior 2 yrs. Any films released to theaters or TV (incl. cable) prior to fest ineligible for Viewer's Choice Award, but may be considered for screenings. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Deadline: July 31. Contact: Temecula Valley Int'l Film Fest, 27540 Ynez Rd., ste. 104, Temecula, CA 92591; (909) 699-6267; fax 695-5126.

THIS PLACE: CONTEMPORARY BORDER PERSPECTIVES, Late September, NM. Fest of films & videos w/ themes relevant to "The Border," a region "w/ a unique culture & history that is at once a boundary, a barrier, a bridge & an arbitrary line dividing the US & Mexico." Incl. film screenings & guest speakers who explore the themes of Southwest & Hollywood; Cultural Icons in Film; Regional History; & New Visions, a presentation of contemporary border issues. Submissions open to recently completed films & videos of all genres by ind producers & students. Mesilla Valley Film Society, in its 8th yr, works to bring alternative & foreign cinema to southern New Mexico & west Texas. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $5. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Carol McCall, This Place: Contemporary Border Perspectives, Mesilla Valley Film Society, Box 1139, Mesilla, NM 88046; (505) 524-8287.

TROUBADOURS: A CHRISTIAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Mid September, CA. Goals of fest are "to provide a forum to showcase & network ind film & video by Christian artists of all backgrounds, traditions & persuasions & to encourage & support internal self-evaluation & critique of Christian media, particularly film & video." Projects that reflect alternative, unconventional, experimental, investigative & avant-garde sides of Christian life encouraged; also projects by &/or about women & people of color. Works by non-Christians examining Christ, Christians, Christian culture, or Christian living accepted, incl. critical & supportive works. All genres accepted. Submissions must not have been previously exhibited, broadcast or distributed for commercial purposes. Fest provides panel & patron discussions, media workshops & media ed. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", S-8. Entry fee: $20. Deadline: late June. Contact: Bret Lutz, curator, Troubadours: A Christian Film & Video Fest, Cathedral Productions, Box 192845, San Francisco, CA 94119-2845; (415) 863-5201.

UTAH SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Mid June, UT. Nat'l competition, sponsored by Utah Film & Video Center, seeks short works in all styles,

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forms & genres under 30 min. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs & are accepted in both film & video divisions in cats of narrative, doc, experimental, animation & Young Media Artists. Prizes for cash, goods & services totaling up to $3,000 awarded in both divisions & all cats, & additional special achievement awards made at discretion of judges. Formats: 16mm, S-8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $10-30. Deadline: early June. Contact: Aaron Barnes, Utah Short Film & Video Fest, Utah Film & Video Center, 20 South West Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84101; (801) 534-1158.

VIRGINIA FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FILM, Late October, VA. Now in 9th yr, fest takes place at Univ of Virginia in Charlottesville & is showcase for 35mm & 16mm ind American films completed w/in previous yr. All genres & lengths accepted, incl. narrative, experimental, doc, shorts & features. Fest offers ind filmmakers "academic focus & commitment to excellence," as well as "collaborative & fest atmosphere during the four days of screenings, discussions & events." All films previewed & selected by committee of scholars & award-winning filmmakers. Works-in-progress w/ projected completion dates before Sept 1 may be entered. Fest has also featured special celebrations of classic films & their creators. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: early June. Contact: Fest Director, Virginia Fest of American Film, Box 3697, 104 Midmont Lane, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903; (804) 982-5277; fax 982-5297; filmfest@ virginia.edu.

VISIONS OF U.S., Late August, CA. Competition seeks original video production from artists, activists or amateurs. Submissions invited in 5 cats: fiction (using video to tell a story); non-fiction (creating your own doc); experimental (taking video medium to creative limits); music video (using original score or previously published music w/ written permission); young people (17 yrs & younger). Grand Prize winner selected from all entries, which must be originally produced & submitted in 8mm, Hi8, VHS, SVHS, VHSC or Beta; interformat editing allowed, & no more than 25% of entry should incl. film transferred to video. Entries should not exceed 20 min. & originality is most important factor. Awards are Sony equipment, incl. Grand Prize: CCD-TR700 Handycam Hi8 camcorder, EV-C100 Hi8 VCR & RM-E700 video editing controller. Sponsored by Sony Corporation & administered by American Film Institute. Formats: 1/2", Beta, 8mm, Hi8. Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Contest Administrator, Visions of US, Video Contest, Box 200, Hollywood, CA 90078; (213) 856-7787.

WINE COUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL, July 8-Aug. 12, CA. Feature films, shorts, docs, animation & videos eligible for consideration for fest held in Napa & Sonoma Valleys. Deadline: June 5. Contact: Justine Ashton, Wine Country Film Festival, 12000 Henno Rd., Box 303, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; (707) 996-2536; fax 996-6964.

FOREIGN

ARSENALS INTERNATIONAL FILM FORUM, Mid September, Latvia. Noncompetitive biennial fest, estab in 1988, invites filmmakers "whose work is based on an unconventional creative approach, whose style is bright & original & who are working on cinema language." Non-commercial, experimental & avant-garde films accepted. Entries accepted w/out genre & form restriction, may be any running time & should have been completed in previous 2 yrs. Programs incl. Forum Main Screening, Panorama, "The Arrival of a Train" (experimental & avant-garde film), children's fest & retros. Organized by Int'l Center of New Cinema in cooperation w/ Riga City Council, National Film Centre of Latvia & Association of Latvia's Film Producers. Fest has no jury; lottery-drawn prize, the *Magic Crystal* & $10,000, awarded at closing ceremony. About 320 films shown at each edition. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: none. Deadline: early June. Contact: Augusts Sukuts, organizing committee, Arsenals Int'l Film Forum, "Arsenals" Starptautiskais Kino Forums, 14, Marstalu Street, Box 626, Riga LV-1047, Latvia; 011 371 2221620; fax 011 371 8820445; vaiva.krasta@org.lv.

ATLANTIC FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Late September, Canada. Founded in 1981, fest has emphasis on film & video productions from Atlantic Canada as well as selected int'l productions. Since 1992, the fest section *ScreenScene* has focused on films for children. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Awards: best film on video under 60 min. ($1,000), over 60 min. ($2,500) & others. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $45-$75. Deadline: late June. Contact: Robin Johnston, exec dir, Atlantic Film & Video Fest, 1541 Barrington St., ste. 326, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 125; (902) 422-3486; fax 422-4006; ag881@gfn.cs.dal.ca.

AUGSBURG CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Early November, Germany. Founded in 1981, fest of films for children has special emphasis on cooperation w/ school classes from entire region surrounding fest. Children's juries trained in seminars months before. Fest offers competition program w/ 2 sections (films for 6-8 yrs, films for 8-14 yrs), as well as info programs & special programs. No entry forms; send in VHS cassette & additional information on film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: none. Deadline: late June. Contact: Fest Director, Augsburg Children's Film Fest, Augsburger Kinderfilmfest, Filmbüro Augsburg, Schoeckstrasse 6, D-86152 Augsburg, Germany; 011 49 821 153079.

BRITISH SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 19-26, UK. Competitive fest for shorts under 40 min. completed in previous yr. Sections incl. Best of British; Atlantic Crossing; British & Int'l Short Films; Retro Work from Australia; Black and Asian films from NY; Experimental Work from France. Major seminar held on European co-production. Awards presented in Best Film, Best Drama Production, Best Student Production, Best Ind Production, Best Short Film Script, Audience Award. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS only. Deadline: June 7.

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL, Early October, Canada. Open to nonprofessional productions, competitive fest, founded in 1969, holds showings in several cities in Canada. Cats incl. amateur filmmakers, ind filmmakers & pre-professional students of film. About 30 prods showcased each yr. Awards: best film, certificates; in first cat additional awards include best Canadian entry, scenario, doc, natural sciences, animation, experimental, editing, humor, teen 16-19, teen under 16. Max running time for entries is 30 min. Entries must have been completed in previous 5 yrs. Formats accepted: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8, Beta, 8mm. Entry fee: $15-40. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Ben Andrews, fest director, Canadian Int'l Annual Film Fest, 25 Eugenia Street, Barrie, Ontario, Canada L4M 1P6; (705) 737-2729.

COPENHAGEN FILM FESTIVAL, Mid September, Denmark. Founded in 1991, this "audience oriented" competitive film fest shows feature films, previews, artistic films, European film art, etc., as well as special programs. The Copenhagen Gay & Lesbian Film Fest is part of this fest. Audiences approach 38,000, & about 120 films are screened annually. Fest bestows Asta Nielsen Film Award, which includes Danish distribution of the film & 30,000DKK (about $5,000). Formats: 35mm. Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Jonna Jensen, director, Copenhagen Film Fest, Bülowsvej 50A, DK 1870 Frb., Copenhagen, Denmark; 011 45 31 35 37 25; fax 011 45 31 35 57 58.

INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR VIDEO ART, Late October/early November, Germany. Competition established in 1992 to provide a "forum of presentation & a new field for experimentation in media art." Award aimed at increasing public awareness of important developments in artistic work w/ time based visual arts video & computer animation. Prize money of DM50,000 ($33,000) divided among a max of 2 winners. Supporting Prize of State Bank of Karlsruhe valued at DM10,000 ($6,600). Entries should have been completed after Jan 1, 2 yrs prior & should not exceed 20 min. Preliminary jury selects max of 50 submitted works to be broadcast on regional channels ARD 3 & ORF; award winners chosen from these selections. Formats: 3/4", Beta, S-VHS, Hi8. Entry fee: none. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Rudolf Frieling, International Award for Video Art, Deutscher Videokinstpreis, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM), Postfach 69 09, D-76185 Karlsruhe, Germany; 011 49 721 93 400; fax: 011 49 721 93 40 19.

HAMBURG INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL, Late October, Germany. Founded in 1990, fest is largest of its kind in Germany, annually attended by over 6,000 spectators. Entries must have lesbian &/or gay content. There are special thematically oriented programs, which are different each yr, & special emphasis on history of lesbian & gay films & filmmaking & silent movies. Fest awards an *Ursula*, an honorary award for best short (up to 30 min.). Fest has text & video archive, which can be used by other fests, & works together w/ other German film fests. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8, 8mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: none. Deadline: late June. Contact: Dorothee Von Diepenbroick/Michael Malert, Hamburg Int'l Lesbian & Gay Film Fest, Hamburg Lesbisch-

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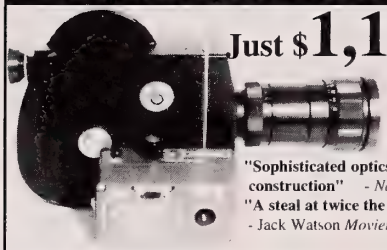
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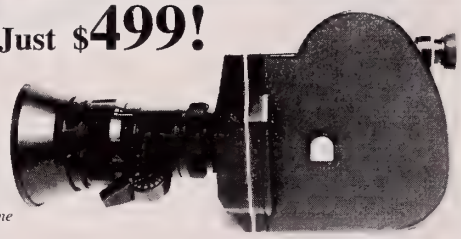
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INTERNATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL FILM FESTIVAL, October 8-11, Italy. Organized by Civic Museum of Rovereto, noncompetitive fest is open to all producers, directors & film/TV makers in field of archaeological, historical, paleo-ethnological and anthropological research. In odd yrs, "Prize Paolo Orsi" of 10 million lire is awarded to work w/ high artistic-scientific qualities in field of prehistoric & protohistoric documentation & research. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Museo Civico, Largo S. Caterina, 43, 38068 Rovereto, Italy; 011 39 464 439055; fax 011 39 464 439487.

KELIBIA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NON-PROFESSIONAL FILM, Late July, Tunisia. Biennial fest, founded in 1964 & organized by Tunisian Minister of Cultural Affairs in collaboration w/ Tunisian Federation of Amateur Filmmakers. Competition open to selected non-professional films under 30 min. w/ "artistic & cultural qualities" in S-8 & 16mm. Awards include medals & diplomas. Fest's goals incl. "encouraging films which represent their national patrimony & their social reality" & "facilitating contacts between different national cultures." Fest also incl. workshops, tributes, conferences & photo exhibitions. Formats: 16mm, S-8. Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Amami Med Lamine, fest director, Kelibia Int'l Fest of Non-Professional Film, Festival International du Film Non-Professional de Kelibia, Box 116, 1015 Tunis R.P., Tunisia; 011 216 1 332 724; fax 011 216 1 332 724.

KROK INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, Mid September, Ukraine. Competitive fest of animated films, which is ASIFA-recognized & awards several prizes, is held on steamship that travels down Dneiper River to the Black Sea. Accepts animated productions completed w/in 2 yrs prior to fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: I. Kapliyana, Krok Int'l Animation Fest, Saxagansky Strasse, 6, 252033 Kyiv, Ukraine; 011 7 044 227 5280; fax 011 7 044 227 3130.

LEIPZIG INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, October 29-November 3, Germany. Annual fest for short & feature length films & videos which seeks to "promote int'l doc & animated films & videos & to provide an opportunity for filmmakers, producers, distributors, media experts & Leipzig cinema-goers to meet in dialogue." Program consists of int'l competition, special programs, video workshops, panel discussions & retro. Competition includes cats for doc films of all genres & productions on video (doc & animation). Separate cash prizes awarded for features & productions under 45 min. in each cat. Entries in competition must not have been screened in public prior to June 1, 1995. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta SP; preview on VHS only. Deadline: June 25. Contact: Leipzig Int'l Doc Film Fest, 594 Broadway, Rm. 908, New York, NY 10012. For addt'l info, contact Jürgen Brüning in Berlin: 011 49 30

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Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who are members of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

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AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

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Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

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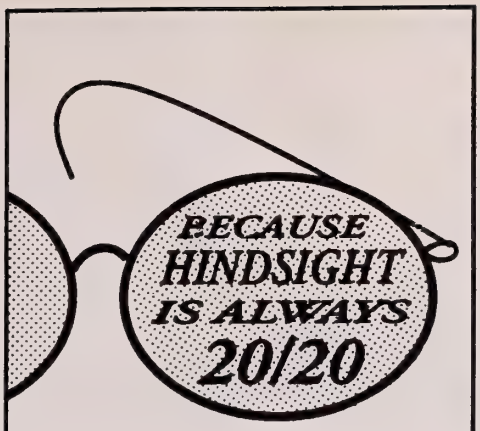
LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August 8-18, Switzerland. Now in its 49th year, fest has been described as "one of world's top half-dozen fests" w/ reputation for innovative programming & support of alternative visions from ind. directors. Unique open-air screenings in Piazza Grande, which holds 7,000. Special sections and out-of-competition screenings. Video competition. Critics' Week & sections devoted to non-fiction. Competition accepts features over 60 min., completed w/in previous year. Prizes: Golden Leopard (Grand Prix) 50,000 SF; 2 Silver Leopards (25,000 SF ea.); Bronze Leopards for best actor & actress; Special Jury Award (10,000 SF). Films should be subtitled in French &/or German. More than 100 buyers from Europe, US & Japan attend. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Deadline: May 30. Contact: Marco Müller, director, Locarno Int'l Film Fest, via della Posta 6, 6600 Locarno, Switzerland; 41 91 751 0232; fax 41 91 751 7465. US contacts: Sophie Gluck & Norman Wang, (212) 226-3269, fax 941-1425; Bill Krohn, tel/fax (213) 883-0078.

MIFED CINEMA AND TELEVISION INTERNATIONAL MULTIMEDIA MARKET, Late October, Italy. Estab in 1959, annual autumn market for TV & film is one of top int'l commercial markets. Aims are to promote contacts among business people in every branch of film & TV industry. MIFED's facilities incl. commercial offices equipped for conducting business transactions & trade & social contacts. Several thousand film & TV company representatives from over 80 countries participate. Held at Milan fairgrounds, market has 27 film theatres w/ varying seating capacities & several thousand square meters of exhibition & booth space. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: varied. Deadline: late June (office bookings). Contact: Elena Lloyd, product manager, MIFED Cinema & Television Int'l Multimedia Market, Mercato Internazionale Cinema e Televisione, E.A. Fiera Internazionale di Milano, Largo Domodossola, 1, 20145 Milan, Italy; 011 39 2 480 12912; fax 011 39 2 499 77020.

NORWEGIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August 16-24, Norway. Norway's major film event, w/ screenings of int'l, Norwegian & Scandinavian films. During 8 days of noncompetitive fest, it presents about 80 feature films, representing a wide geographical & cultural cross section. Formats: 35mm. Entry fee: none. Contact: Gunnar Johan Loevvik, managing director, Norwegian Int'l Film Fest, Box 145, 5501 Haugesund, Norway; 011 47 52 73 44 30; fax 011 47 52 73 44 20.

OKOMEDIA, October 16-20, Germany. Founded in 1984, fest has been organized by Okomedia Institute, offering overview of current film relating to environmental topics worldwide. In recent yrs, more than 300 films from over 50 countries have been entered annually. Along w/ films on contemporary issues, there are screenings focusing on topics of special interest—environmental films for children & young people, nature films, environmental TV productions—as well as spotlights which change yearly. Program complemented by discussions, exhibits, presentations & workshops. Entries

FESTIVALS

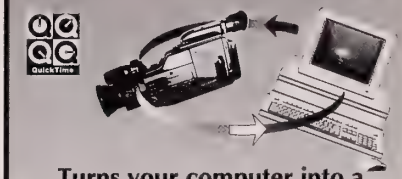


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New York City, NY - RG VIDEO, a fifteen-year old video production and post-production house, today announced that it has moved its operations to a newer and bigger facility in the Midtown South Madison Avenue area. In addition to the move, RG VIDEO will be expanding its services to include more corporate video production services, CD Rom & interactive production, and a full list of new graphic services including 2-D and 3-D animation.

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But it's more than cost that's at issue: "A good working environment," says Ms. Jao, "is as critical to the creative process as cost and service,"

More emphasis on great service while still offering significant savings continues to be RG's objective for the new year. "The new, spacious surroundings and expanded services are now a bonus we can offer," says Jao. According to her, this is RG VIDEO's way of saying thanks to the many clients who over the years have helped RG grow from a single editing suite house to a full service facility with five editing suites that includes inter-format on/off-line editing suites and AVID on/off-line suites.

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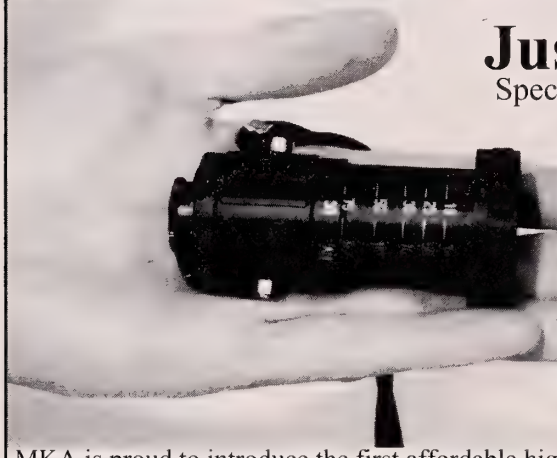
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FESTIVALS

must have been completed w/in previous yr. Int'l jury awards 7 prizes, chosen from approx. 50 films. Selection of fest films shown each yr in 3 or 4 cities in Germany. Fest works closely w/ organizers of environmental film fests in several countries, as well as TV stations & media & cultural institutions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Entry fee: $50. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Heidi Knott, fest director, Okomedia, Okomedia Institute e.V., Habsburgerstrasse 9a, D-79104 Freiburg, Germany; 011 49 76 15 2024; fax 011 49 76 155 57 24.

RIMINICINEMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, September 24-29, Italy. About 55 films selected annually for fest, founded in 1988, which focuses on ind. cimena showing relationships & exchanges between different cultures & languages. Program incls int'l competition open to features never screened before in Italy; int'l competition for shorts made by film students; Federico Fellini Award of 20,000,000 lire to a young or emergent film director. Fest also organizes retros, monographs, 1 person shows, debates, meetings w/ filmmakers & previews. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: none. Deadline: August 10. Contact: Gianfranco Mior Gori, co-director, Riminicinema Int'l Film Fest, Riminicinema Mostra Internazionale, Via Gambalunga 27, 47037 Rimini, Italy; 011 39 541 26399; fax 011 39 541 24227.

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Late September, Japan. Founded in 1985 as major int'l competitive Asian showcase, the annual FIAPF-accredited fest consists of Int'l Competition & Young Competition sections. Int'l competition selects official entries from around world, w/ finalists screened during fest & int'l jury panel selecting winners for awards incl. Tokyo Grand Prix; Tokyo Special Jury Prize; Best Director, Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Artistic Contribution & Best Screenplay. Entries for this section must have been produced in 35mm w/in 15-months preceding fest, must not have taken part in competitive sections of other int'l fests & have running time of over 60 min. All films will have Japanese subtitles (cost borne by fest). Young Cinema Competition is aimed at encouraging young directors. Int'l jury selects award winners from entries submitted by directors 35 yrs or younger w/ no more than 3 features commercially released, or by directors of any age who have completed a first film. Films must have been produced in 35mm during 18 months preceding fest, must be no less than 60 min. & must not have competed in other int'l fests. Gold, Silver & Bronze prizes accompanied by cash grants of ¥20 million, ¥10 million, & ¥5 million respectively. Doc films ineligible. Shipping address: Tokyo Int'l Film Fest, c/o Nippon Cine Arts Co., Ltd., 2-5 Honmura-cho, Ichigaya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan; 011 81 3 3268-5204; fax 011 81 3 3268-5235. Formats: VHS. Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Michiko Morioka, director of programming, Tokyo Int'l Film Fest, Organizing Committee, 4F, Landic Ginza Building II, 1-6-5 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104, Japan; 011 81 3 3563 6305; fax 011 81 3 3563 6310.

VALLADOLID INTERNATIONAL FILM WEEK, Late October, Spain. Now in 41st yr, fest's main objective is "to show & promote films of artistic quality which contribute to the knowledge of

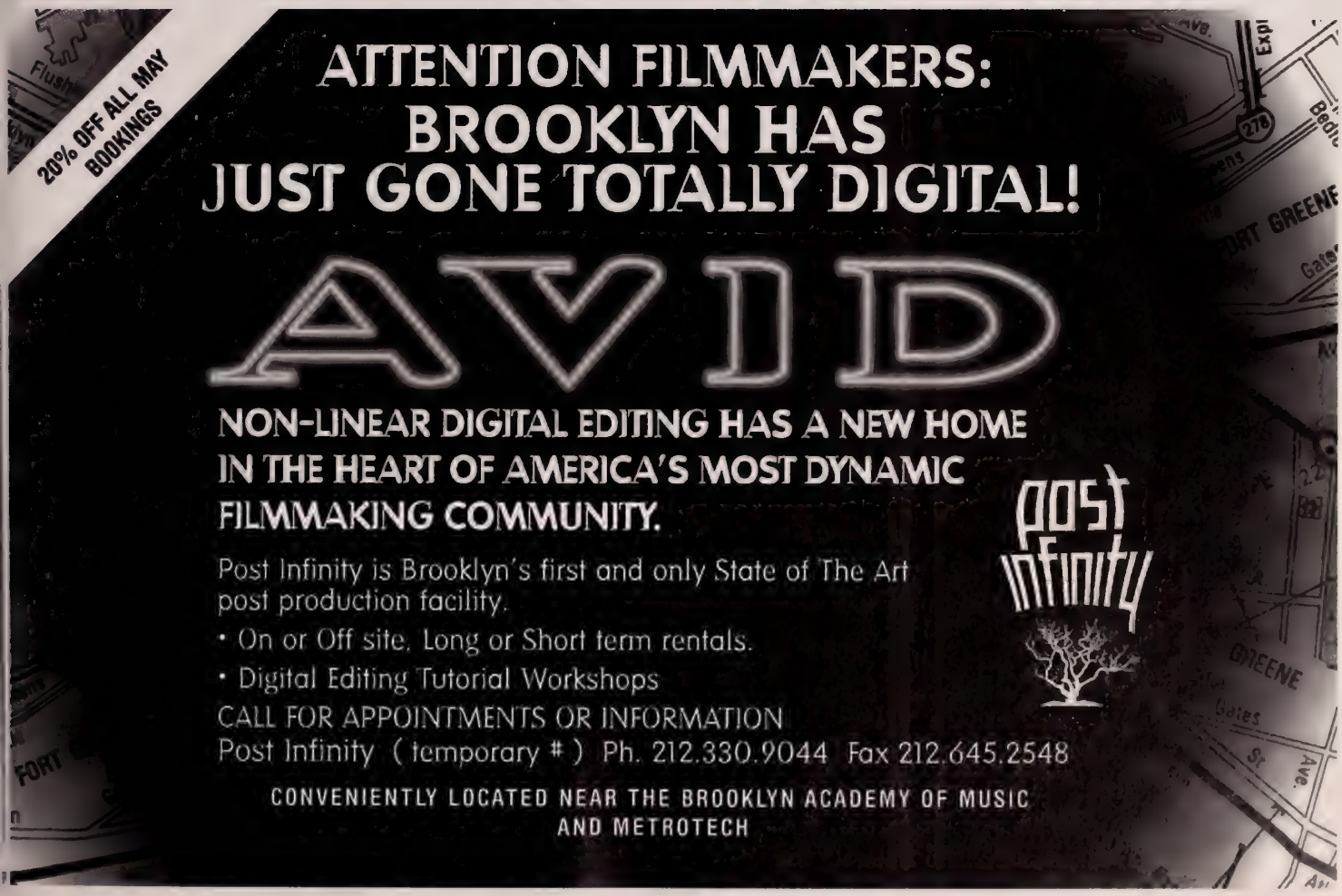
worldwide cinematography." It is considered one of most serious & well organized film events in Spain. Sections: *Official*, a panorama of current int'l cinema, in which features or shorts may participate in or out of competition; *Meeting Point*, non-competitive section incl. films from past & present worthy of special attention; *Time of History*, docs that deal w/ moments of history from privileged viewpoint of cinema; & *Tributes*, devoted to presentation & analysis of directors, genres, styles, schools, etc. Any film entered in the *Official*, *Meeting Point* & *Time of History* sections must be produced in preceding yr w/ no previous commercial, video or TV screening in Spain & no previous screening at any other fest in Spain, in or out of competition. All sections are for 35mm productions; 16mm is accepted in *Time of History* section only. Features & shorts accepted. Awards: Golden Spike & Silver Spike to 2 best features (Spanish distributor of Golden Spike winner receives 3,000,000 ptas); Prize to Best New Director, competing w/ 1st or 2nd feature (w/ cash prize of 1,000,000 ptas); Best Actor/Actress Awards; Best Director of Photography Award; Golden Spike & Silver Spike to 2 best short films (Golden Spike Short winner receives 500,000 ptas); Jury Award may also go to feature & short. Another ind jury awards prize of 1,000,000 ptas to filmmakers of Best Doc in *Time of History* section, as well as 2 Second Prizes. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm (*Time of History* section only). Entry fee: none. Deadline: late June. Contact: Denise O'Keeffe, coordinator, Valladolid Int'l Film Week, Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid, Hospederia de San Benito, c/o San Benito, 1, Box 646, 47001 Valladolid, Spain; 011 34 83 30 57 00; fax 011 34 83 30 98 35.

VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Early September, Italy. World's longest running fest as well as one of most prestigious; attended by several thousand guests, luminaries & large press contingent. Work shown in & out of competition, in a range of sections. Aim of fest is to "promote understanding & diffusion of cinema in all its forms as art & entertainment, in order to stimulate its creative activity & favor its development in the context of a society which is constantly in movement & transformation." Venezia LII, fest competitive section, presents feature films considered to be most interesting & significant at the current time, w/out precluding any style or genre. Greater & lesser known filmmakers are placed together to provide broad int'l panorama. No more than 2 films in competition may be screened daily in this section, & no participating country allowed to present more than 3 films in competition. Competition awards: Golden Lion to best film; Special Jury Award; Volpi Cup to best actress; Volpi Cup to best actor; three Oselle d'Oro to three technical/artistic contributions among films in competition; Golden Medal of Italian Senate for film that best underlines civil progress & solidarity; Volpi Cup for best supporting actor or actress. All fest entries must not have screened publicly in Italy or been released outside of country of origin & must not have been presented in competition at other int'l fests. Selected films must be subtitled in Italian. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Entry fee: none. Contact: Dario Ventimiglia, managing dir., Venice Int'l Film Fest, Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica Venezia, La Biennale di Venezia, Settore Cinema e Spettacolo Televisivo, Ca'Giustinian, 1364/A, San Marco, 30124 Venice, Italy; 011 39 41 523 0852; fax 011 39 41 520 4163.

VEVEY INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF COMEDY FILMS, Late July, Switzerland. Founded in 1981 in honor of Charlie Chaplin, competitive fest is open to comedy films. Entries must be Swiss premieres & must not have received any award in other competitive fests acknowledged by FIAPF. In some cases, films which have been screened in German or Italian part of Switzerland which have not yet had commercial runs in French part may be accepted. Fest presents int'l film competition, short & long films, Swiss selection. Awards: best feature length comedy; best actor/actress; best director of photography of a feature film; special mentions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: none. Contact: Frédérique Glardon/P. Henry, Vevey Int'l Fest of Comedy Films, Fest Int'l du Film de Comédie, La Grenette, Case Postale 325, CH-1800 Vevey, Switzerland; 011 41 21 921 2292; fax 011 41 21 921 1065.

Erratum

The March listing for the **Cannes International Film Festival** erroneously indicated that the Independent Feature Project works with Cannes to select features for the Directors' Fortnight. IFP facilitates the distribution of applications to US filmmakers & coordinates screenings, but it is not involved in the selection process.





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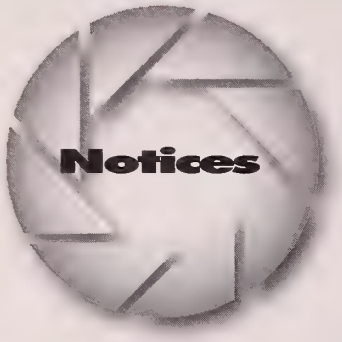
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Competitions

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST is accepting scripts from throughout US. 5 to 6 winners will be chosen to receive $500 cash award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: Ongoing. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop National Contest, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

Conferences • Workshops

8TH SOUTHEASTERN MEDIA INSTITUTE, June 15-23, 1996 in Columbia, SC. Weekend & week-long workshops w/ award-winning ind. & industry film/video artists in: Producing/Directing the Ind. Doc; Camcorder Workshop; Digital Editing; Hi8 to Broadcast; Video Prod.; Exploring Multimedia; CD-ROM & the Internet; Marketing & Distributing Ind. Film; Screenwriting; Film Criticism; more. Discount for early reg. For brochure: South Carolina Arts Commission Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696, fax 734-8526; mswisher@scsn.net.

ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA (ACM) addresses problems faced by public access and community TV directors and staffs nationwide at its National Conference, July 17-20 in Washington, D.C. ACM National Office: (202) 393-2650.

INT'L FILM & VIDEO WORKSHOPS in Tuscany, Italy. 30 1-wk workshops & master classes in cinematography, directing, editing, writing, producing & camera work. Also, 4-wk introductory summer program for university students and others. Workshops begin May 5. Contact David H. Lyman (207) 236-8581; fax 236-2558.

NEW YORK FILM/VIDEO COUNCIL, the oldest non-profit serving the ind. film & video community in NYC, will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a special program at MoMA on June 20 at 6 pm in the Titus Theater. Event will feature notable guest speakers and film/video works from five decades of ind. film & video. Additional screening of film & video works presented at MOMA's Titus 2 Theater, 3pm, June 20. Admission on Thursday nights is on a pay-what-you-wish basis. Reception to follow. For info, call (212) 330-0450.

THE PERRY GROUP invites writers to submit character-based unproduced TV comedies for The Comedy Lab, a free workshop. Scripts will be staged in a four-workshop series beginning in June 1996. Send to Gary Swartz, literary manager, 221 Avenue A, #18, New York, NY 10009.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offers seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation and Tax Exemption," and more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

Films • Tapes Wanted

ANIMATION at Underground Atlanta during the 1996 Olympics: ACT seeks animated works by independent filmmakers. Entries accepted on 1/2" or 3/4" video. Extended deadline: May 2, 1996. Cash prizes awarded, enormous exposure. Send $10 per entry (payable to Friendship Ambassadors Foundation) to: Amy Morley, assistant curator, ACT, FAF, 31 Park St., Montclair, NJ 07042-3407; (212) 864-1892.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX, ind. producer offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in series of 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, a Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, is accepting all genres, under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled with name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201. (716) 884-7172; e-mail: wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; WWW: http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia and Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For more info contact Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION seeks films & videos by black ind. makers, directors, or producers for "Black Vision" portion of *Screen Scene*, weekly 1/2-hr show that previews TV lineup & latest theatrical releases. Contact: *Screen Scene*, BET, 1899 9th St. NE, Washington, DC 20018; (202) 608-2800.

CAFE Y PELICULA looking for films & videos for possible monthly exhibition. Students' work welcome. No payment; ongoing deadline. Send 3/4" or 1/2" with appropriate release, credits, awards & personal info to: Cafe y Pelicula, PO Box 362991, San Juan, PR 00936-2991; crubin@caribe.net.

CHARISMATIC MASS TELEVISION seeks media art shorts for new monthly screening series. All genres accepted, any length. Ongoing deadline. Send artist statement, videotape & SASE. 3/4" preferred, Hi8 or 1/2" OK; returnable with SASE. Syracuse University, Art Media Studies, attn. Justine Wood, 102 Shaffer Art Bldg., Syracuse, NY 13244.

CINCINNATI ARTISTS' GROUP EFFORT seeks proposals for exhibitions, performances & audio/video/film works to show in their galleries. Experimental, traditional & collaborative projects encouraged. Contact: CAGE, 1416 Main St., Cincinnati, OH 45210; (513) 381-2437.

CINE CLUB seeks VHS submissions of ind. shorts for future programs. Send SASE & brief résumé to: Cine Club c/o Sophie Fenwick, 335 Court St., 82, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Also welcomes proposals from ind. curators & others.

CINEQUEST, weekly 1/2-hr. TV series profiling best of nat'l & int'l ind. cinema & video, looking for films/videos, all genres, less than 20 min., to air on 30 min. cable show. Work over 20 min. will air on monthly special in Orlando, FL market during prime-time. Concept of show is to stretch perceptions of conventional TV & expose viewers to scope & talent of inds. Submit on 1/2" or 3/4". Submissions need not be recent, no limit or deadline. Will acknowledge receipt in 10 days. Send pre-paid mailer for return. Contact: Michael D. McGowan, Cinequest Productions, 2550 Alafayia Trail, Apt. 8100, Orlando, FL 32826; (407) 658-4865.

CITY TV, an Emmy Award-winning, progressive municipal cable channel in Santa Monica, seeks programming of any length, esp. works about seniors, disabled, children, Spanish-lang. & video art. Our budget is limited, but we offer opportunity for producers to showcase work. Cablecast rights may be exchanged for equip. access. Contact: Lisa Bernard, programming specialist, City TV, 1685 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 458-8913.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for the Spirit of Dance, a live, 1 hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted.

Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER seeks film & videos in all genres for a Fall 1996 exhibition on contemporary issues of immigration in the US. Send preview VHS, resume & description of work to L. Somi Roy, Roy/Emmons Associates, 115 South Street, New York, NY 10038; (212) 227-6895; or print to Richard Peña, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023.

FROG PRODUCTIONS seeks student/independent fims and videos for cable access TV show. Any length/genre, VHS preferred, 1/2" or 3/4" acceptable. Include info about work/artist, SASE if return desired. Fred W. DeVecca, Frog Prods, PO Box 158, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.

GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for *Living With AIDS*, a half-hour magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4 tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, Living With AIDS Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

HALCYON DAYS PRODS. seeks video segments (1-5 min.) by 15- to 25-yr-olds for video compilation show. If piece is selected, you may have chance to be video correspondent for show. Work may be editorial, real-life coverage, political satire, slapstick—you decide. Just personalize. Submit VHS or Hi8 (returnable w/ SASE) to: Mai Kim Holley, Halcyon Days Prod., c/o Hi8, 12 West End Ave., 5th fl., NY, NY 10023; (212) 397-7754.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8") videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone # to: In the Mix, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

IN VISIBLE COLOURS Film & Video Society seeks videos by women of color for library collection. Work will be accessible to members, producers, multicultural groups & educational institutions. For info: Claire Thomas, In Visible Colours, 119 W. Pender, ste. 115, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1S5; (604) 682-1116.

IND. FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, cable access show seeks student & ind. films & videos to give exposure. Send 3/4" format w/ paragraph about artist & work. The Independent Film & Video Showcase, 6755 Yucca St., #8, Hollywood, CA 90028, Attn: Jerry Salata.

THE KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape with brief bio to Lisa Deanne Smith, c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson Street, 6th fl., New York, NY 10013.

LATINO COLLABORATIVE, bimonthly screening series, seeks works by Latino film/videomakers. Honoraria paid. Send VHS preview tapes to: Vanessa Codorniu, Latino Collaborative Bimonthly Screening Series, 280 Broadway, ste. 412, NY, NY 10007; (212) 732-1121.

NERVOUS IMPULSE, nat'l screening series focusing on science, seeks films/videos. Open to experimental, non-narrative & animated works that address scientific representation or knowledge or interplay between science & culture. Send preview VHS & SASE to: *Nervous Impulse,* Times Square Station, PO Box 2578, NY, NY 10036-2578.

NEW DAY FILMS, the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to non-theatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. (914) 485-8489.

NEWCITY PRODS. seeks completed or in-progress docs on all subjects for monthly screenings on professional large screen video projector. Committed to establishing forum for new voices. Send cassettes to NewCity Productions, 635 Madison Ave., ste. 1101, NY, NY 10022; (212) 753-1326.

NEWTON TELEVISION FOUNDATION seeks proposals on ongoing basis from ind. producers. NTF is nonprofit foundation collaborating w/ ind. producers on docs on contemporary issues. Past works have been broadcast on local & nat'l public TV & won numerous awards. Most are currently in distribution in educational market. Contact NTF for details: 1608 Beacon St., Waban, MA 02168; (617) 965-8477; ntf@tmn.com or walshntf@aol.com.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS, series broadcasting selected works statewide on public TV, seeks works of any genre (except corporate/instructional) produced by ind. artists currently residing in NC. Modest monetary compensation & telecast filmmaker interview of artist for works selected. Entry fee: $15 for individuals, $5 for students & NC Media Arts Alliance members; separate fee for each submission. Contact Ellen Walters, NC Visions, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg., UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax 5039; ncvision@hamlet.uncg.edu.

OCULAR ARCADE, new on ACTV in Columbus, OH, showcases ind. video (art, doc, experimental). Send Hi8, VHS, or 3/4" dub to Ocular Arcade, D. Master, 135 West 1st Ave., Columbus, OH 43201.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/Williamsburg area of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Please call or send SASE for info: OCULARIS, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

OFFLINE seeks creative & independently produced videos. The hr-long show airs biweekly on public access channels throughout NY State & around the country. Submissions should not exceed 20 min. Longer works will be considered for serialization. Formats: 3/4", S-VHS, Hi8 or VHS. Incl. postage for tape return. *OffLine*, 203 Pine Tree Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850; (607) 272-2613; 72137.3352@compuserve.com.

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THE OTHER SIDE FILM SHOW is looking for entries in all cats: narrative, doc, experimental, animation, etc. for TV series of ind. films/videos. Submissions should be under 30 min. 3/4" video preferred, but VHS acceptable. Send w/ SASE for tape return to U. of South Florida, Art Dept., 4202 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL 33620-7350, attn: The Other Side.

OVERWINED PRODUCTIONS, weekly intimate theater & public access program, seeks contemporary film/video in any format to be showcased in & around Detroit area. Contact: Patrick Dennis, 2660 Riverside Dr., Trenton, MI, 48183-2807; (313) 676-3876.

REGISTERED seeks experimental & non-narrative videos about consumerism &/or modern ritual for nationally touring screening. Send VHS for preview w/ SASE & short description to: Registered, attn. Joe Sola, PO Box 1960, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009.

SAN FRANCISCO SHORT FILMS, a new organization dedicated to supporting the short narrative film as a unique art form, seeks films under 35 min. in length for screening programs. Filmmaker must be resident of 415, 510, 408, 707, 916, or 209 area code regions in Northern CA. Films must have been completed on or after Jan. 1, 1993. All formats OK, but submit preview in VHS to P.O. Box 424520, San Francisco, CA 94142. Submissions can also be brought to monthly meeting, held first Thursday of each month at 7pm at Colossal Studios, 15th St. & DeHaro.

SEEKING WORKS by ind. filmmakers. 16mm, 8mm & video for screening series in downtown Manhattan. Send VHS copy to Leslie Napoles, c/o CRC, 7th fl., 435 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast! Submit to: EDGE TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

STATEN ISLAND COMMUNITY TELEVISION PRODUCER seeks experimental works, all subjects, by ind. video & film artists. The more explicit, the better; film & video on 3/4" preferred, but 1/2" &/or 8mm acceptable. Send tapes to: Matteo Masiello, 140 Redwood Loop, Staten Island, NY 10309.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED for exhibitions/screenings & a collection of essays considering the relationships between the Middle East & the West on a personal or geo-political scale. We wil be looking at crises of identity, nationalisms/borders, naming, gender/sexuality, class & the exoticization of difference. Send documentation of work in any medium, w/ postage if return requested: Public Domain, 186 Avenue B, #5, New York, NY 10009; ph/fax (212) 982-8967.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS is seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TOXIC TELEVISION seeks broadcast-quality, creative video shorts (under 10 min.) for alternative TV experience. Looking for works in animation, puppetry, experimental, computers, etc. Send VHS or 3/4" tape & résumé to: Tom Lenz, 6060 Windhover Dr., apt. A, Orlando, FL 32819.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA seeks VHS submissions, any style, content or length, for Student Union Gallery video installation, "Today's Special: Video Diner" in Oct. 1996. Forum for alternative videos for dialogue on a variety of issues. Send VHS, resume, brief statement/description, & SASE for tape return to Vikki Dempsey, coordinator, PO Box 454, Tucson, AZ 85702; (502) 884-1354.

UNQUOTE TV, 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing new, innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, experimental, performance works under 28 min. Program seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote TV*, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS is accepting video & 16mm film in all genres for next season. Fee paid if accepted. Send VHS tape w/ SASE to: Film Committee, UTICA, 88 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

WEIRD TV, satellite TV show airing weekly on Telstar 302, specializes in alternative viewing. Will consider works of 3 min. max., animation or shorts. Submit work to: Weird TV, 1818 W. Victory, Glendale, CA 91201; (818) 637-2820.

PUBLICATIONS

AEIOU.2 (ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION INFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE) provides descriptions and submission information on over 220 exhibition venues, nat'l & int'l, showing challenging, alternative ind. film & video. Avail. for $7 (incl. addressed mailing label) from AEIOU.2, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, a computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY,

NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 9577.

DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH GRANTS 1996, providing current info on nearly 6,000 funding sources, is now available. Volume is 1,224 pages and costs $135 plus 10% for shipping & handling, as well as sales tax in AZ & CA. To order, contact The Oryx Press, 4041 North Central Ave., ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; (800) 279-6799.

G. K. HALL & CO. announces publication of *Index to American Photographic Collections, 3rd Enlarged Ed.*, edited by Andrew Eskind. Locates work of more than 65,000 photographers in 585 collections & offers new computerized photo info. 1,024 pp. $195. For info: (212) 654-8452; to order: (800) 223-2336, or Order Dept., Simon & Schuster, 200 Old Tappan Rd., Old Tappan, NJ 07675.

IFFCON '96 TRANSCRIPTS now available. Topics discussed by financiers, commissioning editors & producers during the 3rd annual International Film Financing Conference included foreign TV opportunitites, international distribution, rallying US dollars, navigating European film funds. For a copy, send $36 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

MEDIANET: A Guide to the Internet for Video and Filmmakers. Available free at http://www.infi.net/~ rriddle/medianet.htm, or e-mail rriddle@infi.net.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION offers *History for Hire: Using Cultural Resources as Film Locations*, an ongoing series illustrating the benefits & drawbacks of film prods in museums, private residencies and along historic streets. $6 per issue; 10+ copies at $3 plus shipping & handling. Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 673-4286.

SHORT VIDEO MOVIES: To finish our handbook on the short video prod. process, we want to include your experiences w/ improvised scenarios or scripts, non-professionals or pros. Let's trade reels. Contact David Shepherd, Group Creativity, 2 Washington Sq. Vill. #70, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-7830.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

APERTURE INC., a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers a grant of $10,000 to a first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. For info on the 1996 Aperture Grant, please send SASE to Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on an ongoing basis. Contact BF/VF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax 3540; bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat and 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propoganda,

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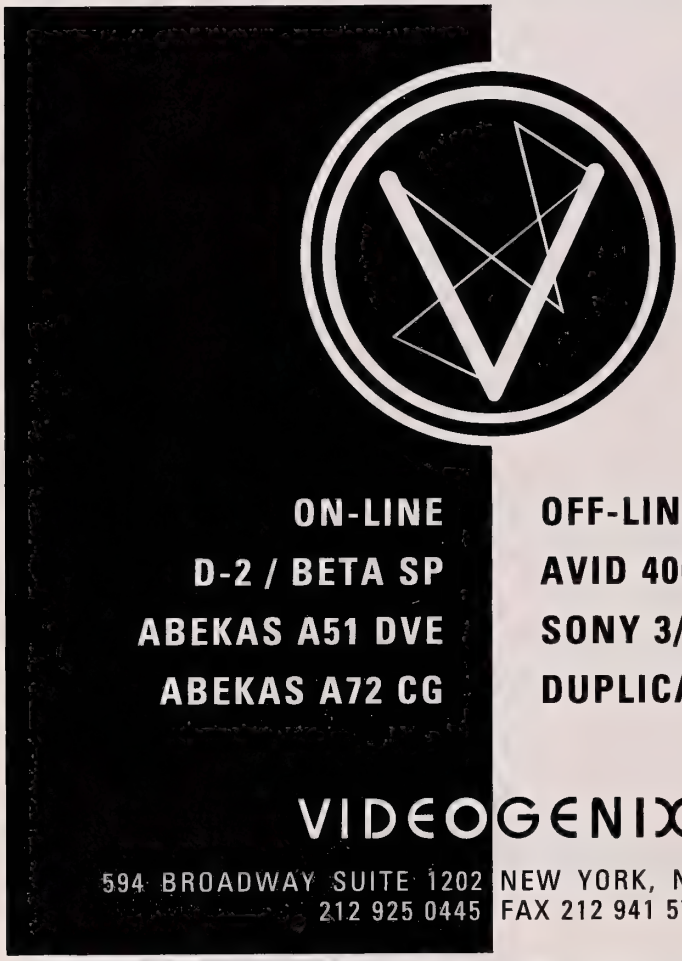
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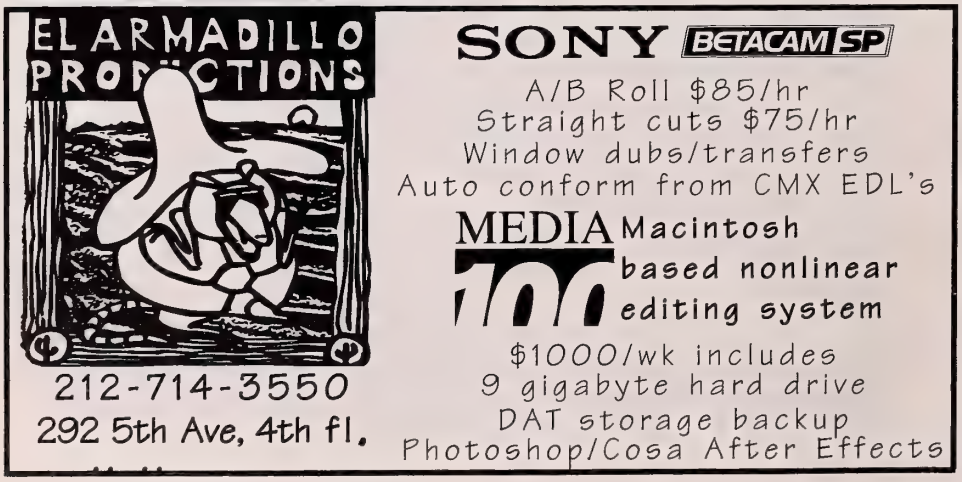
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promotional and commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

DCTV Artist-in-Residence is now accepting appls for $500 worth of equipment access on ongoing basis w/in 1 yr. When 1 funded project is complete, DCTV will review appls on file & select next project. Pref given to projects already underway. For appl., send SASE to: AIR, c/o DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10013-4435.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

MANHATTAN NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK Annual Revolving Fund provides grants of up to $20,000 to Manhattan organizations interested in becoming community sites for public access to cable TV prod. Grant recipients are responsible for outreach & training workshops in video prod. w/ technologically accessible equipment. Deadline: May 17. Contact MNN, 110 E. 23rd St., 10th fl., New York, NY 10010, attn: Victor Sanchez; (212) 260-2670, fax 260-2604.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION offers awards from $10,000-$350,000 to support various stages of independent film and video production and script development. Proposals should bring original, challenging Asian American stories to the public airwaves. Janice Sakamoto, NAATA, 346 9th St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814, fax (415) 863-7428.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS OFFICE offers funding for American artists to increase worldwide recognition of the excellence of arts in the United Srates, or to increase public understanding of cultural influences from abroad that invigorate American society. Deadlines run from May to June, 1996. Call International Partnerships Office, NEA, PO Box 581, Ithaca, NY 14851; (202) 682-5422.

ON TRACK VIDEO, a leading New York-based post production facility, announces a new interac-

tive question and answer Worldwide Web site offering video post production help and advice to industry professionals: http://www.otv.com.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax 1114; piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr., $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center (ETC) is accepting appls. Program offers opportunity to study the techniques of video image in intensive 5-day residency program. Artists work on variety of cutting edge & hi-tech equipment. Program open to experienced video artists. Appls must incl. résumé & project description, as well as videotape of recent work (if you are a first time applicant), either 3/4" or VHS formats, w/ SASE for return. Deadline: July 15, 1996. Write: ETC Ltd., 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

STANDBY PROGRAM is a nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to providing artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post-prod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: The Standby Program, PO Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax 219-0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER is dedicated to educators interested in using video technology as a learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating a nat'l network of educators who are interested in any or all aspects of the growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

WANTED: INFO ON STOLEN CAMERAS. There has been a recent increase in incidents of stolen professional cameras, both in NY and nationally. In Tri State NY region many cameramen have had similar thefts—four men approach, one distracts him/her while other 3 take camera. I am collecting info & organizing an investigation & would like to speak w/ anyone who has info or has experienced theft. Write PO Box 581, Ithaca, NY 14851.

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Continued from p. 64

electronic publishing? What's required? How are new projects developed? This weekend workshop, co-sponsored by AIVF and **P.O.V. Interactive**, will answer these and many other questions and give participants the tools and framework to begin developing their own projects. Marc Weiss of *P.O.V. Interactive* will also discuss their plans for "brokering" proposals to CD-ROM publishers.

Admission by application due ***May 15****; limited to 20 participants. Criteria for acceptance will include production track record and/or ideas for work in new media. For workshop description and application, contact Pam Calvert (212) 807-1400 x 223 or Tessa Derfner, (212) 989-8121 x 315.*

When: All day Saturday and Sunday, June 1 and 2.
Where: Manhattan location TBA
Price: $75 AIVF members/$85 others

OPEN DISCUSSION: SELLING YOUR WORK TO CABLE

Explore the standard provisions of cable contracts and how they affect independents with Robert Freedman, AIVF/FIVF's legal counsel. This is *not a workshop*, but a forum for independent producers to discuss their experiences with cable in a community of peers. *Free; pre-registration helpful but not required.*

When: Tuesday, June 4, 6:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF Offices
Contact: Pamela Calvert (212) 807-1400 x 223

DO WE HAVE YOUR TAPE? READ THIS!

For many years, AIVF has maintained a large archive of videotapes of members' work. In the process of moving to our new space, we came to the inescapable conclusion that we must deaccession this resource. If you sent a tape to us for the archive and would like it back, please call Pam Calvert, (212) 807-1400 x 223, to arrange its return. *If we do not hear from you by June 30, we will erase your tape and donate it to a nonprofit media center for stock.* We have every intention of continuing to provide information about our members' work to programmers, distributors, funders, and educators; to that end, we are working on a long-term project to create a computer database of work. Stay with us, and we'll keep you posted.

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Border Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Austin, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Houston, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: David Mendel, (713) 529-4185

Kansas City, MO:
When: 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Los Angeles, CA:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Swing Cafe, 8543 Santa Monica Blvd.
Contact: Pat Branch, (310) 289-8612

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Washington, DC:
When: Wednesday, May 15, 7 p.m.: "Interactive Technology and Independent Filmmaking"
Where: Washington Performing Arts, 400 7th St. NW (at D St.)
Contact: Lorie Paterson, (301) 340-9630/(202) 414-8151

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

May 23 is the deadline for nominations to the AIVF board of directors. Board members are elected to a three-year term. The board gathers four times per year in NYC for weekend meetings (AIVF pays travel costs).

We have an active board; members must be prepared to set aside time to fulfill board responsibilities, which include:

- Attendance at all board meetings and partic-

ipation in conference calls when necessary;

• Preparation for meetings by reading advance materials;

• Active participation in one or more committees as determined by the organization's needs and as requested by the board chair or executive director; fulfillment of commitments within agreed-upon guidelines;

• General support of the executive director and staff as needed.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members in good standing. You may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old. To make a nomination, send or fax (212/463-8519) name, address, and telephone of nominee and nominator; we cannot accept nominations over the phone. Nominations should be sent attn: Pamela Calvert.

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

We are pleased to announce two new discounts, including our first in Pennsylvania!

Lemonwood Productions offers AIVF members a 15% discount on all production and editing services, incl. BetaCam SP shooting pkg, SVHS, 3/4", Amiga, slides & still photography. *Lemonwood Productions, 711 S. Braddock Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15221 (412) 241-3544. Contact: Dean Lemon.*

Los Angeles's **Cinetopia Production** has "negotiable low rates" for AIVF members on a complete Arri BL4 package—camera, grip, truck, and crew. *Cinetopia Production, 923 E. 3rd St., #112, Los Angeles, CA 90013 (213) 617-2429. Contact: Steve Choe.*

To offer a service that will benefit AIVF members, call Leslie Fields (212) 807-1400 x 222.

MEMBERABILIA

AIVF members **Scott Andrews** and **Stephen Olsson** won a DuPont-Columbia award for excellence in broadcast journalism for *School Colors*. **Deborah Hoffman** also won a DuPont award for *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter.* • **Intermedia Arts** won a First Bank Sally Ordway Ivine Award for building community through its support of artists and local Minneapolis neighborhoods. • **John Kelleran** won a $2,500 award from the Hamptons Film Festival for *The Painter,* which will air on Bravo. • Several AIVFers won awards at the New York Expo of Short Film & Video: **Alex Rivera**, *Papapapa,* silver award (doc); **Anthony Tenczar**, *Spoken Flesh,* bronze award (doc); **Scott Sona Snibbe,** *Lost Momentum,* bronze award (animation); **Esther Duran,** *Anacleto Morones,* gold award (narrative); **Lynne Sachs,** *Which Way Is East,* gold award (doc); **Jacqueline Turnure**, *The Silence Between,* silver award (experimental).

MEMORANDA

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

The Center for Arts Criticism, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

Benefactors: Irwin W. Young

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Nonprofit Members

ACES Media Arts Center, New Haven, CT; ACS Network Productions, Washington, DC; AVD Hans Strom Biblioteket, Volda, Norway; AVFN Int'l, Anchorage, AK; Access, Houston, TX; Alternate Current, NY, NY; The American Center, Paris, FR; American Civil Liberties Union, NY, NY; Ann Arbor Community Access TV, Ann Arbor, MI; Ann Arbor Film Festival, Ann Arbor, MI; Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY; John Armstrong, Brooklyn, NY; Art Matters Inc., NY, NY; The Asia Society, NY, NY; Assemblage, NY, NY; Athens Center for Film & Video, Athens, OH; Austin Film Society, Austin, TX; Benton Fdn., Washington, DC; Blackside, Inc., Boston, MA; CNC, Washington, DC; Carnegie Inst., Pittsburgh, PA; Carved Image Productions, NY, NY; Center for Investigative Reporting, San Francisco, CA; Center for New American Media, NY, NY; Chicago Video Project, Chicago, IL; Coe Film Association, NY, NY; Colelli Productions, Columbus, OH; Columbia College, Chicago, IL; Command Communications, Rye Brook, NY; Communication Arts-MHCC, Gresham, OR; Community Television Network, Chicago, IL; Denver Film Society, Denver, CO; Duke Univ., Durham, NC; Dyke TV, NY, NY; Eclipse Commun., Springfield, MA; Educational Video Center, NY, NY; Edwards Films, Eagle Bridge, NY; Empowerment Project/Kasper & Trent, Chapel Hill, NC; Eximus Company, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Fallout Shelter Productions, Mansfield, OH; The Film Crew, Woodland Hills, CA; Fox Chapel High School, Pittsburgh, PA; Great Lakes Film & Video, Milwaukee, WI; ITVS, St. Paul, MN; Idaho State Univ., Pocatello, ID; Image Film Video Center, Atlanta, GA; Int'l Cultural Prgm, NY, NY; Int'l Film Seminars, NY, NY; Jewish Film Festival, Berkeley, CA; KPBS, San Diego, CA; Komplex Studio Merdeka, Selangor, Malaysia; Little City Fdn./Media Arts, Palatine, IL; Long Bow Group Inc., Brookline, MA; Manhattan Neighborhood Network, NY, NY; Media Arts, Palatine, IL; Mesilla Valley Film Society, Mesilla, NM; Milestone Entertainment, Irving, TX; Miranda Smith Productions, Boulder, CO; Missoula Community Access, Missoula MT; NAMAC, Oakland, CA; NRX/DPH, NY, NY; NY Inst. of Technology, Old Westbury, NY; Nat. Center for Film & Video Preservation, Los Angeles, CA; Nat. Latino Community Center/KCET, Los Angeles, CA; Nat. Video Resources, NY, NY; Neighborhood Film/Video Project, Philadelphia, PA; Neon, Inc., NY, NY; New Image Productions, Las Vegas, NV; New Liberty Productions, 911 Media Arts Center, Seattle, WA; Philadelphia, PA; Ohio Arts Council, Columbus, OH; Ohio Univ., Athens, OH; One Eighty One Productions, NY, NY; Outside in July, NY, NY; Pennsylvania State Univ., Univ. Park, PA; Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Pittsburgh, PA; Post Modern Productions, Elsah, IL; Promontory Point Films, Albany, NY; Public Benefit Corp., Detroit, MI; Rainy States Film Festival, Seattle, WA; Merlina Rich, NY, NY; Paul Robeson Fund/Funding Exchange, NY, NY; Ross Film Theater, Lincoln, NE; Ross-Gafney, NY, NY; SUNY/Buffalo-Dept. Media Studies, Buffalo, NY; San Francisco Art Inst., San Francisco, CA; School of the Art Inst., Chicago, IL; Scribe Video Center, Philadelphia, PA; Southwest Alternate Media Project, Houston, TX; Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, NY; Strato Films, Hollywood, CA; Sundance Inst., Los Angeles, CA; Swiss Inst., NY, NY; Terrace Films, Brooklyn, NY; Thurston Community Television Archive, Olympia, WA; Trinity Square Video, Toronto, Ontario; Tucson Community Cable Corp., Tucson, AZ; UMAB School of Social Work Media Center, Baltimore, MD; Univ. of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI; Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE; Univ. of Southern Florida, Tampa, FL; Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI; VA Festival of American Film, Charlottesville, VA; V.I.E.W. Video, NY, NY; Vancouver Film School, Vancouver, BC; Veritas Int'l., Elsah, IL; Video Data Bank, Chicago, IL; Video Pool, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Video Video Ltd., NY, NY; Vox Productions, Inc., San Francisco, CA; WNET 13, NY, NY; WTTW Chicago, Chicago, IL; W. Hollywood Public Access, West Hollywood, CA; Wexner Center, Columbus, OH; Women Make Movies, NY, NY; York Univ. Libraries, North York, Ontario.



BY PAMELA CALVERT

INSURANCE ALERT

We were informed in March by Kaye Insurance/ Amalgamated that carrier Hartford Insurance Co. had cancelled its equipment plan for our members due to high claims, and that Kaye had been unable to find any other provider. At press time we are working on alternatives, but meanwhile we wish to remind members that Walterry continues to offer equipment coverage among its AIVF plans; contact Steve Thomas, Walterry Insurance Brokers, 7411 Old Branch Ave., Box 128, Clinton, MD 20735; (301) 868-7200; (800) 638-8791. For an update, contact Pam Calvert (212) 807-1400 x 223. We deeply regret any disruption in work this loss of service may have caused members.

SPRING EVENTS

MEET AND GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF offices. *Free; open to AIVF members only. Limited to 20 participants. RSVP required; (212) 807-1400 x222.*

MICHELE FORMAN
Director of Development, ***40 Acres and a Mule Productions,*** *Spike Lee's independent production company*
Event co-sponsored with Black Filmmaker Foundation and open to AIVF and BFF members.
When: Wednesday, May 5, 6:30 p.m.

MARCO MUELLER
Director, ***Locarno Film Festival***
Come hear about this major European festival's new independent film initiative at the MIFED Market in Milan.
When: Tuesday, June 11, 6:30 p.m.

"IMAGE INNOVATORS" AT LINCOLN CENTER

AIVF members will receive discounts on tickets to a new series at the Walter Reade Theater: "Image Innovators," dedicated to media artists who bring alternative views to the moving image. The first program will feature film/videomaker and AIVF member **Jem Cohen**, and will include the U.S. premiere of *Lost Book Found* (1996, 35 min), as well as new 16mm and Super 8 shorts. *For more information call the Film Society of Lincoln Center, (212) 875-5610.*
When: Thursday, May 23, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center, New York
Price: $5 with AIVF member I.D.

WORKSHOP: NEW MEDIA PRODUCTION FOR INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEOMAKERS

Producing CD-ROMs, designing World Wide Web sites and developing other interactive media are not the same thing as video and film production, but some of the skills and sensibilities that independents have developed could be adapted for these new technologies. What's different about

Continued on p. 62

"HOW TO..." A SUMMER INTENSIVE WORKSHOP SERIES

We are pleased to present our first annual summer program of intensive workshops, focusing on the hard information you need to get your work made and seen in a world with fewer funders and distributors than ever. *Pre-registration and a 50% deposit required to hold your place. Call Leslie Fields (212) 807-1400 x 222 for more information and to register.*

MORRIE WARSHAWSKI
SHAKING THE MONEY TREE: HOW TO GET MONEY FOR FILMS AND VIDEOS

Morrie Warshawski's first workshop on fundraising was so successful that we're bringing him back to the New York area, this time for a *full day* workshop on raising funds for film and video. Learn more about: how to design your film/video project from the onset to attract funders; cultivating and approaching funders up-front through telephone inquiries, letters and personal contacts; the importance of research; how to get money from individual donors through direct mail, parties, and in-person requests. This workshop is invaluable to the emerging film/video maker trying to find his/her way through the maze of fundraising, and to the seasoned film/video maker who is searching for new opportunities to fund a project outside of the public sphere. You may have missed the last workshop, but you can't afford to miss this one. Sign up *today*, as space is limited.

When: Sat. June 15, 9 am - 4 pm; *Where:* AIVF Office; *Price:* $85 member/$100 others.

JAMES SCHAMUS
NO BUDGET FILMMAKING

Schamus, codirector of NY production company Good Machine, has taught this now-legendary workshop all over the country to sell-out crowds. Learn the ins and outs of guerilla cost control as only Schamus can teach it, in what amounts to a crash course in indie filmmaking.
When: Sat., June 29, 10 am - 2 pm; *Where:* Manhattan location TBA; *Price:* $55 member/ $70 others.

Coming in July and August—Watch Next Month's Independent!

HOW TO FIND AND WORK WITH A DISTRIBUTOR

Looking for a distributor and don't quite know what to look for and what to ask? Here's an opportunity to meet with a number of distributors to find answers to your questions. This half-day workshop will explore: the role of the distributor and his/her relationship to the producer; what the producer should know before going out to look for a distributor; how a producer can best work with a distributor once the contract is signed.

HOW TO READ A DISTRIBUTION CONTRACT

Don't sign that distribution contract just yet!!! Wait until after you've taken this workshop. Join *Jodi Peikoff* of Sloss Law Offices as she guides you through the intricacies of a distribution contract.

HOW TO FINANCE YOUR FILM

Mary Jane Skalski of Good Machine will assemble a panel of experts to unravel the mysteries of limited partnerships, co-production deals, subchapter S, and other survival strategies in a post-funding universe.

HOW TO SELF-DISTRIBUTE YOUR WORK

If you're deciding whether to go with a distributor or distribute your work on your own, you can't afford to miss this full day of seminars with film/video makers who have undertaken the challenge of self-distribution. Issues to be addressed: why self-distribute; the tools needed for self-distribution; how to target a distribution market for your film or video; the development of co-ops for the '90s.

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INTEGRATED SERVICES

January 1, 1996

Independents line up for bargain rates at DCTV & Electric Film!



Downtown Community TV Center and Electric Film are located at 87 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10013 fax (212)219-0248

New York- **DCTV's** free classes and low cost equipment access have been attracting huge crowds to the historic firehouse on Lafayette Street.

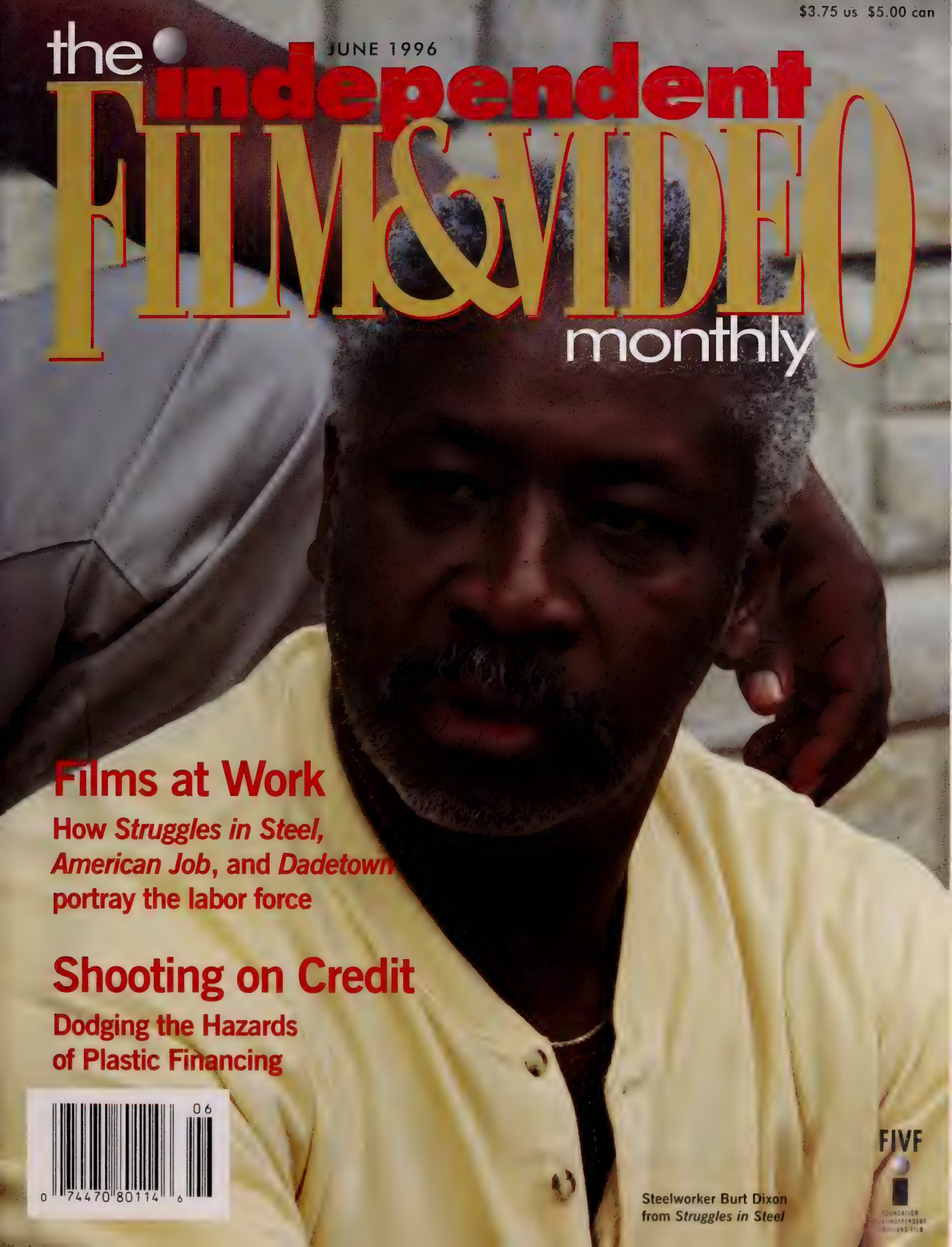
When **DCTV** announced almost free Avid instruction & editing,community producers packed the sidewalk trying to get into the newly renovated building.

Despite warnings from the police, **Electric Film** has simultaneously opened newly installed Avid off-line and on-line editing suites with res 27 & amazing 3D-DVE. Interformat suite and inexpensive Betacam packages already make crowd control a daily problem. People can call DCTV at **1-800-VIDEONY** or **(212)966-4510** & Electric Film at **1-800-TAPELESS** or **(212)925-3429.**

$3.75 us $5.00 can

JUNE 1996

the independent FILM&VIDEO monthly



Films at Work

How *Struggles in Steel*, *American Job*, and *Dadetown* portray the labor force

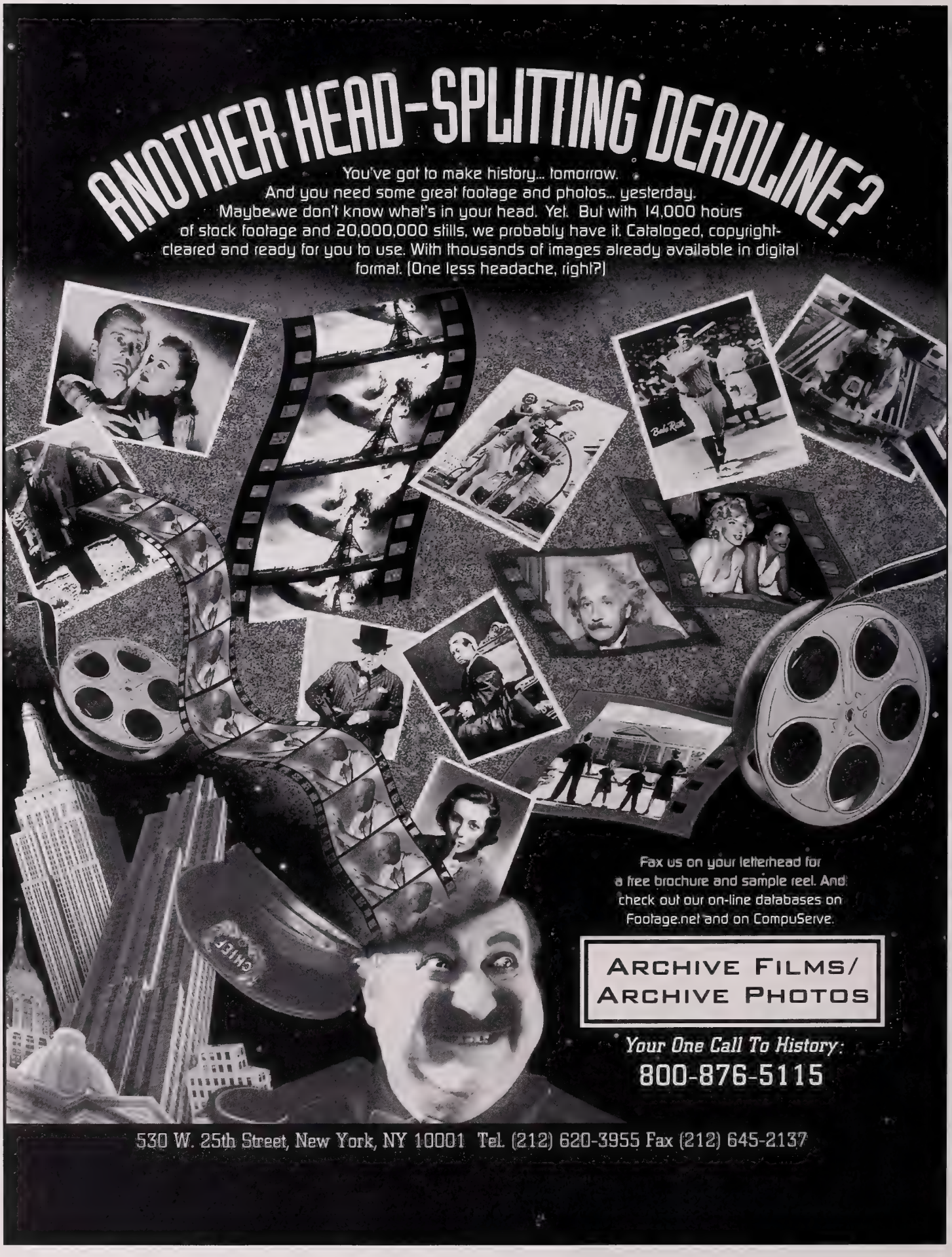
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Dodging the Hazards of Plastic Financing

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Steelworker Burt Dixon from *Struggles in Steel*

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June 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 5

Publisher: Ruby Lerner
Editor in Chief: Patricia Thomson
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Contributing Editors: Kathryn Bowser, Luke Hones, Barbara Bliss Osborn, Robert L. Seigel, Esq.
Art Director: Daniel Christmas
Advertising: Laura D. Davis (212) 807-1400 x225
National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Fine Print (800) 874-7082; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press
Send address changes to: *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent film and video, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@ aol.com; http://www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF/

Periodical Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

Publication of *The Independent* is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Publication of any advertisement in *The Independent* does not constitute an endorsement. AIVF/FIVF are not responsible for any claims made in an ad.

Letters to *The Independent* should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length.

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FEATURES

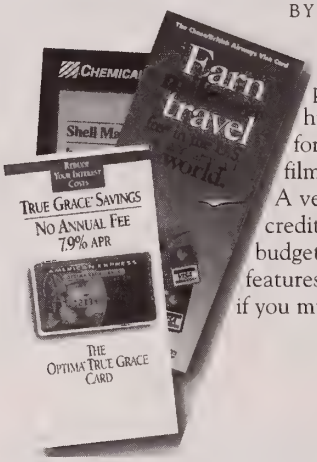
28 **Buy Now, Pay Later: The Pros and Cons of Credit Card Financing**
BY ROBERT DARDON

In 1987, Robert Townsend used credit cards to help secure production funds for *Hollywood Shuffle* and revolutionized indie film financing. Nine years later, plastic has become the independent filmmaker's financial weapon of choice—even though the weapon is occasionally known to backfire.



31 **Doing the Credit Card Shuffle**
BY JIM BIHARI

Thinking about putting your credit history on the line for the sake of your filmmaking career? A veteran of two credit-financed low-budget features tells you how, if you must.





32 **Images of Labor: A Roundtable on *American Job, Dadetown*, and *Struggles in Steel***
BY PATRICIA THOMSON

Who are today's working class heroes? Editor Patricia Thomson took the Sundance Film Festival as an opportunity to interview a group of filmmakers who used fact and fiction to visualize the struggles of the blue-collar worker in postindustrial America.



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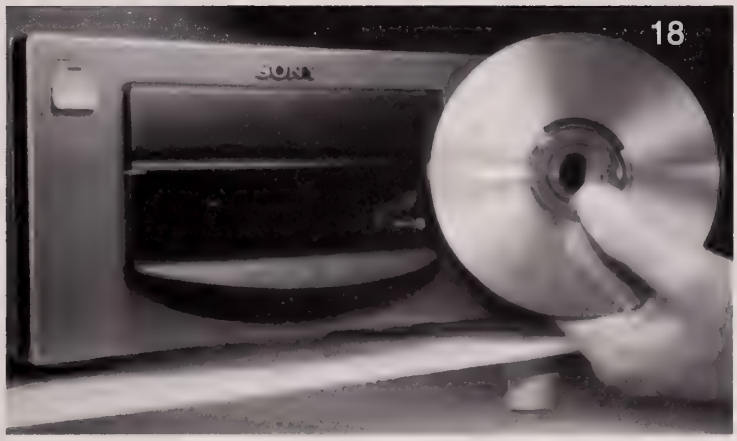
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COVER: Burt Dixon, one of the steelworkers interviewed in *Struggles in Steel*, Tony Buba and Ray Henderson's moving oral history of African Americans in the steel industry. Photo: Curtis Reaves







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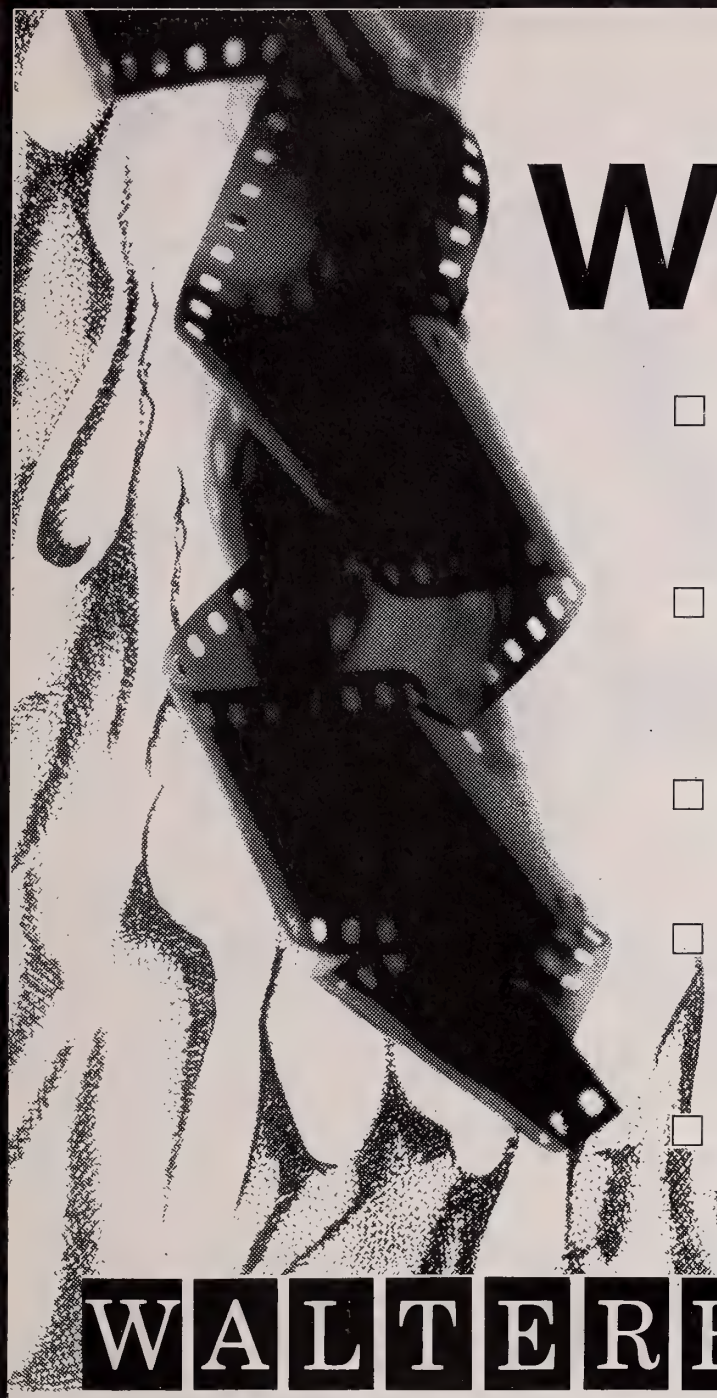
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They Shoot 16mm, Don't They?

To the editor,

I would like to provide some information on the independent filmmaking scene here in Seattle lest *Independent* readers get the impression from Mitch Albert's story "Long Range Rovers: Media Arts Centers That Are Surviving the '90s" [April 1996] that 911 Media Arts Center has "tossed" its "old and unused" Steenbeck away and abandoned film for all-digital production.

I and several other 911 members were initially disturbed that the 8-plate Steenbeck and other 16mm equipment had been moved out to provide space for the new Mac workstation. Maintenance and upkeep on the Steenbeck proved to be a burden to 911. The Steenbeck was old, but hardly *unused*. Within the last two years, my animated short *Reign of the Dog*, Greg Lachow's feature *Seven Mysteries of Life*, and Stephen Less' short *The Red Ball* were all edited on it, along with other works.

Fortunately a new sister organization to 911, Wiggly World, has emerged to take responsibility for the 16mm equipment. Wiggly World has lots of energy and ambition and a commitment to maintaining access to 16mm for local independents. They also will be keeping close ties to 911, which continues to support filmmaking with its "Shoot So It Cuts" classes.

Multimedia does dominate the Seattle production landscape, but 16mm filmmakers are also abundant. I was on a jury last fall for the Seattle Arts Commission Media Arts grants. Of the 35 applications, there were two multimedia projects, nine video projects, and 24 film projects. According to Seattle film equipment leaser Marty Oppenheimer, CD-ROM producers prefer to shoot their source footage in film because of its high resolution. And the Rainy States Film Festival just completed its second successful year screening Northwest-produced work.

Digital tools play an increasing role in the independent producers' repertoire, but reports of the death of 16mm, as Mark Twain might say, are greatly exaggerated.

Ruth Hayes
Seattle, WA

Mitch Albert responds:

I have nothing against 16mm. Some of my best friends shoot 16mm. Your report of my report of its death is greatly exaggerated. But thanks for the update on Seattle's 16mm scene.

Don't Rule Out MoMA's Film/Video Library

To the editor,

I and the staff of the Museum of Modern Art's Circulating Film & Video Library would like to express our appreciation to *The Independent* for Jerry White's article in your April 1996 edition ["MoMA Film Library Girdles Acquistions Budget"]. We who labor daily in getting films and videos out to teachers, programmers, etc., are truly pleased that there are people who recognize what we are doing.

I would, though, like to clarify some things. First, we are alive and well and having a good and busy year. It is true that we are downsizing our collection by withdrawing titles that do not rent or sell. However, we are taking on new independent work and older works that we believe in.

Some examples of outstanding recent work we have acquired are *Prisoners of Conscience* by Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi; *Fate* by Fred Kelemen; and several short avant-garde works by Donna Cameron—all of which had successful screenings in New York this past March. Older independent works we have recently taken on include *The Last Clean Shirt* by Alfred Leslie; *Pull My Daisy* by Alfred Leslie and Robert Frank; and nine feature films by Jon Jost.

We have also been able to make important historic films available, some in 35mm. We have acquired two dozen seminal works in 35mm from the Library of Congress Archive, including *Within Our Gates* by Oscar Micheaux; early work by America's first women filmmakers, Alice Guy-Blaché and Lois Weber; and a reel of 23 early animation pieces.

From the museum's own film archive, some of the best preserved negatives of films directed by D.W. Griffith from 1910 to 1913 for the Biograph Company have been transferred to Beta SP masters. We are assembling them into programs for distribution on VHS cassettes. They include wonderful performances by Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Robert Harron, Blanche Sweet, and Mabel Normand.

We are celebrating these recent acquisitions with a public screening program running from May 12 to June 10.

There are, unfortunately, a number of factual errors in Jerry White's piece. The Department of Film and Video does, in fact, actively solicit grants for the Circulating Film Library, specifically to publish catalogs, make prints, upgrade systems. Generous grants totalling several hundred thousand dollars have been received over the past 15 years from the MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Museum's Film Preservation Fund, the Andy Warhol Foundation, and most recently from the New York Women in Film's Film Preservation Fund.

Furthermore, contrary to the impression conveyed in the article, the Andy Warhol Foundation has wholeheartedly supported the restoration and distribution of the Warhol films by the Department of Film and Video with a most generous grant that has resulted in the preservation to date of 30 films. Although there is a hiatus in distribution, the Foundation remains committed to continued preservation over the next three years and hopes to return titles to distribution as soon as possible.

Finally, I am not supervising the Library on a volunteer basis, as he states. Much as I love working at the museum, my love has its limits. I am being paid for my efforts. And in case your readers are wondering—we are in the black and ready to take your orders. Just call Marilyn Mancino at 212/708-9530.

William Sloan, Librarian, Circulating Film & Video Library, Museum of Modern Art, NYC

Can the Feds Regulate Public Access?

To the editor,

I am confused by something I read in your recent article "FCC To Get Ax?" [Jan/Feb '96 issue]. The author states, "The FCC does enforce federal requirements, like that for public access TV, that to some extent protect public interests..." My understanding was that the a cable company might choose to provide one or more public access stations to the county it wanted to provide service for, depending on such factors as how much competition there was for the franchise; how much the company wanted to appear to be serving the public interests; and, most importantly, how strong the local government was at negotiating. The terms of the deal, including how much financing

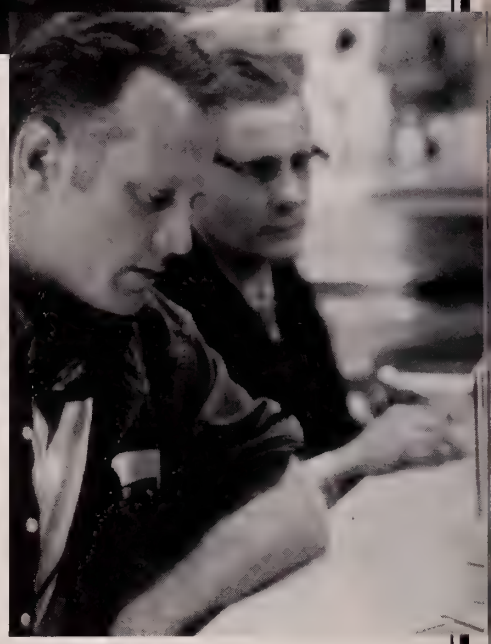
Continued on p. 21

Media News

The Rise and Fall of AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE

BY MAX J. ALVAREZ





IT WAS THE CLOSEST THING WE HAD TO A CHANNEL Four-UK or a National Film Board. Amidst the anti-cultural political climate in the U.S., *American Playhouse* furnished independent filmmakers with a utopian array of services, ranging from financial assistance to public TV exposure to potential theatrical distribution. Fifteen years after its creation, *American Playhouse* is dead.

The tragic collapse of *Playhouse* in late 1995 was an inevitable occurrence following a demoralizing series of setbacks during the past several years. Already reeling from devastating PBS and corporate funding cutbacks and ill-fated financial alliances, the organization received its death blow last November when top executive Lindsay Law departed for Fox Searchlight Pictures.

American Playhouse, a PBS fixture since the first show aired on January 12, 1982, passionately embraced the written word, the adult theatrical and literary drama, and the small, personal independent film. Drawing from an extraordinary pool of accomplished actors, writers, and directors, *Playhouse* challenged commercial network television and blockbuster-crazed Hollywood by respecting the integrity of its audience and demonstrating that the BBC was not the sole purveyor of high-quality dramas.

The series was more ethnically diverse than its folksy Horton Foote image would suggest, particularly after the arrival of Lindsay Law as executive v.p. and executive producer during its second season. Law, a New York University graduate with a background in television production, green-lighted African-American projects from director Bill Duke (*The Killing Floor*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Meeting*), Asian stories by Emiko Omori (*Hot Summer Winds*) and Wayne Wang (*Eat a Bowl of Tea*), and breakthrough studies of the contemporary gay experience by authors Armistead Maupin (the highly rated *Tales of the City* mini-series), Craig Lucas (*Blue Window* and *Longtime Companion*), and Terrence McNally (*Andre's Mother*). Women directors were highly visible at *Playhouse*, including Nell Cox (*The Roommate*), Joyce Chopra (*Smooth Talk*), documentarian Barbara Kopple (*Keeping On*), Lynne Littman (*Testament*), Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*), and Neema Barnette (*Zora Is My Name*).

Littman's 1983 *Testament* became *American Playhouse*'s first theatrical release, and the next dozen years brought forth many more, including features by Jon Jost (*All the Vermeers in New York*), Kenneth Branagh (*Much Ado About Nothing*), Ramon Menendez (*Stand and Deliver*), Gregory Nava (*El Norte*), Todd Haynes (*Safe*), and Hal Hartley (*Surviving Desire*, *Simple Men*, and *Amateur*). There were acclaimed high-risk documentaries such as Errol Morris's *The Thin Blue Line*, Jan Oxenberg's *Thank You and Good Night!*, and Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's *Brother's Keeper*. There were *Playhouse*-initiated PBS airings of neglected independent features and shorts from the seventies and eighties. There were completion funds given to a then-unknown Tom Kalin for his $80,000 black-and-white drama *Swoon* (released theatrically in 1992). "It allowed us to finish the film the way it needed to be finished," recalls Kalin.

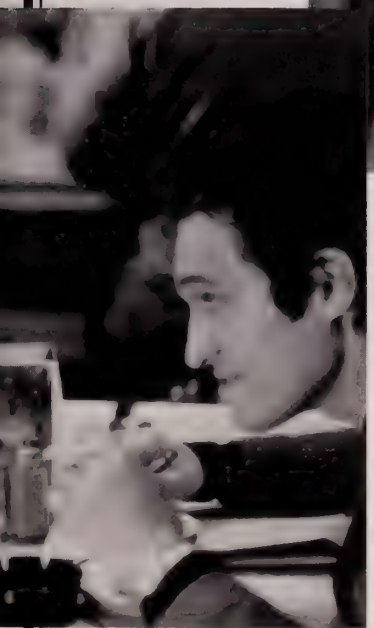
The Kalin-*Playhouse* relationship led to Mary Harron's *I Shot Andy Warhol*, which Kalin co-

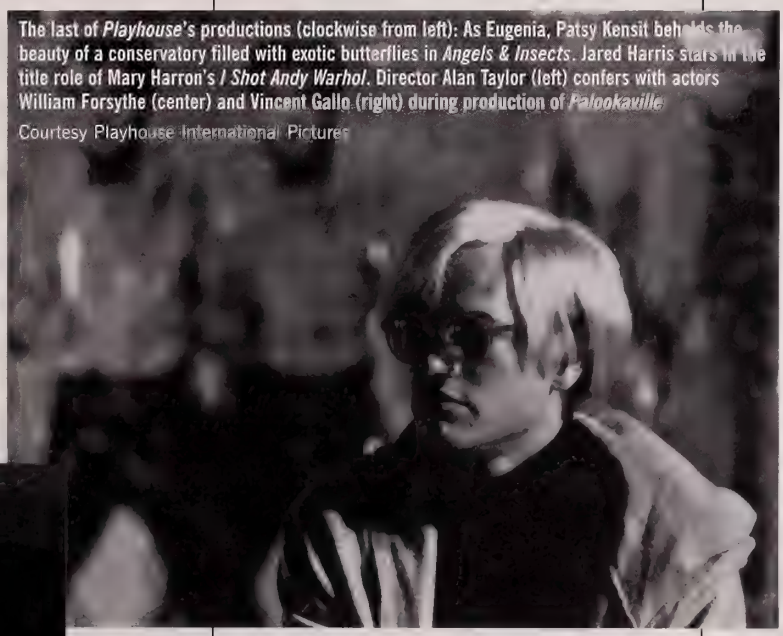
produced with Christine Vachon, and Kalin praises the production company for providing unwavering emotional and artistic support. "Along the time of production and shooting, they really backed us up," he says. "Lindsay was a presence on the set in a really good way."

Philip Haas, director of *Angels & Insects* and the *Playhouse* co-produced *The Music of Chance*, concurs. "I certainly owe my feature career to *Playhouse* and Lindsay Law. For the kinds of films we do in which language is important and ideas are important, without *Playhouse* we wouldn't have been able to make them. *Angels & Insects* needed a *Playhouse*-type organization to galvanize the funding."

Law was known for giving breaks to first-time feature directors such as *Warhol*'s Mary Harron. He hired Haas after screening the latter's BBC-produced project *Money Man*. He hired Alan Taylor to direct the upcoming crime comedy *Palookaville* on the basis of Taylor's NYU short *That Burning Question*.

"I remember going to a meeting where everyone was real friendly," says Taylor. "From that point on their involvement was always supportive, eager, and cheerful. I remember [Law, et al.] coming to the sets and spreading all this good will, and at dailies they always laughed the loudest. It was sort of a dream situation."





The last of *Playhouse*'s productions (clockwise from left): As Eugenia, Patsy Kensit beholds the beauty of a conservatory filled with exotic butterflies in *Angels & Insects*. Jared Harris stars in the title role of Mary Harron's *I Shot Andy Warhol*. Director Alan Taylor (left) confers with actors William Forsythe (center) and Vincent Gallo (right) during production of *Palookaville*

Courtesy Playhouse International Pictures

But the dream did not end happily.

American Playhouse initially received public funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), local public TV stations, and the National Endowment for the Arts. At its height, funding from PBS/CPB reached an annual level of $8.5 million. In 1992, CPB restructured, instituting a new policy of sending a share of its moneys directly to PBS for the latter to disburse to ongoing series. As a result, *Playhouse* experienced a slight decrease in public funds. The following year the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies, a private contributor since the second season, announced an end to its sponsorship. Then in March 1994 PBS revealed its own two-year plan to zero out *Playhouse* funding.

"It's been trailing down gradually, and the last major [PBS] commitments were in the $6-7 million range for essentially eight to nine titles a year," observed Sandra Schulberg, *Playhouse*'s senior vice president. "The last grant was much reduced, and that was specifically provided in order to enable us to complete and deliver the last programs that were already scheduled for production. We're working on those funds now, basically wrapping up loose ends."

Jennifer Lawson, the former PBS executive who dictated the *Playhouse* funding cuts in 1994, says the costs of producing dramatic programming were out of sync with available public TV funds. "It was obvious that something would have to give in terms of PBS's ability to continue to provide financial support for the series, and that's not looking at *Playhouse* in isolation but in the context of other programs that PBS was regularly financing."

Lawson adds that non-PBS arts grants were not increasing at the same level as basic production costs. "We tried to work through *Playhouse* to reduce the number [of seasonal shows] to make it easier for them to sustain the quality. The stations were very supportive of that, too. But that is so very difficult for a drama series because you need freedom [to develop projects]."

Schulberg feels the PBS decision was shortsighted and was the result of *Playhouse* confiding in the public television system about its plans to seek alternative sources of private sector financing. PBS responded by cutting the series loose, a curious move given *Playhouse*'s efforts to help PBS reduce its annual obligations to $2 million. "[B]ut I think when they took a look at the business plan and either saw the amount of funding we were seeking from the private sector or just the prospect that we were forecasting a smaller reliance on their funding, they may have decided to give us a two-year commitment and then cut it off [entirely] in the hope that we could go it alone from then on." This month is the official cut-off date for PBS funding.

PBS announced it was dropping the ax just as *Playhouse* made public the formation of Playhouse International Pictures, a for-profit theatrical production company with $70 million in financing from the Samuel Goldwyn Company and other groups. It was hoped that this new theatrical arm, which had been in the planning stages for two years [see *The Independent*, July 1994], would compensate for the PBS loss. Then Goldwyn experienced its June 1995 financial crisis, prompting additional investors to back out. While Lawson believes the initial Goldwyn alliance was a potential financial magnet for *Playhouse*, she doubts PBS would have continued funding the series. "It needed so much more additional financial partners than the Goldwyn deal."

With his ship rapidly sinking, Lindsay Law left to head Fox Searchlight, causing Playhouse International Pictures' negotiations with several foreign distributors to collapse. Schulberg was left behind to sort out the Goldwyn chaos.

"It became increasingly clear that Goldwyn was not going to be able to pay what was owed to us," says Schulberg, who initiated a lawsuit against Goldwyn in January to win back rights to *I Shot Andy Warhol* and *Palookaville*. The matter was resolved the following month when Goldwyn accepted a buyout offer from Metromedia and an infusion of working capital from Orion Pictures. This enabled the distributor to pay $800,000 of the $925,000 owed *Playhouse* and to fulfill its distribution plans for the final *Playhouse* theatrical films.

American Playhouse is no longer, and many find it difficult to acknowledge this grim fact. A PBS publicist noted that the series will have a presence on public TV for several more years as the balance

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of *Playhouse* productions receives contractual broadcast airings. *Playhouse* chairman Ward Chamberlain speaks optimistically about ways in which to keep the *Playhouse* name alive and active in the independent field. But no one seems clear as to how this can be achieved without financing, PBS, or a theatrical distributor.

Philip Haas, who will be directing his next feature for Lindsay Law at Fox Searchlight, shares with his fellow filmmakers the intense sadness of losing this unique haven for American independents. "It was the only European model for making movies."

MAX J. ALVAREZ

Max J. Alvarez wrote about short subjects distributors in the January/February issue of The Independent.

MEDIA NEWS

Kodak Kills Super 8 Sound Film

DELIVERING A DEVASTATING BLOW TO MANY NO-budget and experimental filmmakers, Eastman Kodak announced in February that manufacture of all Super 8 sound films and one Ektachrome silent product has ceased. In a statement issued to film schools and Kodak dealers, the company said the products to be "discontinued upon depletion of current inventories" are Kodachrome sound in 50-foot and 200-foot cartridges, Ektachrome Type A sound, and Ektachrome Type G silent. Kodak projected that remaining supplies of these products would last between six and 48 months, "based on historical sales rates." The 200-foot cartridges are expected to last approximately six months, for instance, while Kodachrome sound might last four years.

At the same time, Kodak reiterated its commitment to Super 8 by continuing production of three products: two Super 8 black-and-white stocks, Plus-X and Tri-X, and their venerable color movie film, Kodachrome-40, all in silent 50-foot cartridges. Kodak pledges to continue these products in production "as long as there is reasonable market demand."

Kodak's announcement confirmed changes in Super 8 that were foreshadowed in January when the 200-foot sound cartridge of K-40 suddenly disappeared with no prior warning. Historically Kodak has announced product discontinuations six months to a year in advance. The surprise with 200 footers mobilized a number of filmmakers, including Bob Bates from the Pittsburgh area. Bates recalled, "At first, I felt like I was hit with a double whammy, because it was the same week I heard from Elmo [Mfg. Co.] USA that they can't repair their great projectors anymore." Bates took his concerns directly to the top by writing Kodak CEO and President George Fisher at 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650. He requested Kodak resume production of the 200 footer to allow filmmakers room to plan. Bates found that although that was not possible, "Kodak has been responsive from the top down. I encourage other filmmakers, exhibitors, and curators to write."

This time around, James F. MacKay, Manager of Marketing Programs in Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging Division, was one of the key people to respond to Super 8 filmmakers in crisis. MacKay moved quickly to dispel rumors, called for a worldwide survey of supplies, and issued a summary of the continued availability of each Super 8 product. He headed off a fledgling lobby action to reconsider manufacture of the sound films by explaining that "Kodak no longer has the capability to stripe Super 8 film." While sympathetic to the dire impact of this discouraging news on filmmakers, MacKay underlined Kodak's commitment to Super 8 silent products. He noted, "We have hung in a long time to try to nurture the Super 8 filmmaker."

Despite the fact that "fewer than one-thousand units of the 200-foot sound cartridge were



R.I.P. super 8 sound film: 1973-1996. Inset: Bob Brodsky at work in 1980 with his super 8 sound Chinon film camera, which accommodated 50-foot silent and sound film cartridges. Courtesy Brodsky & Treadway

sold in the U.S. last year," MacKay and his division seem committed to facilitate the Super 8 situation and have been remarkably accessible and responsive to individuals. They acted very swiftly to help those who rely on the 200-foot sound cartridge by introducing the "Export" version of the 200-foot product into the U.S. supply chain. This version, which includes Kodak processing, was only available overseas until a recent legal decision opened the way for its sale in the U.S. In February, the Export 200-foot sound product (CAT #180-9359) became available over the counter in New York City or directly by telephone (800-621-3456) at a very reasonable price. Its processing will be honored at the Kodak Dallas lab.

In some European and Pacific countries, the amateur "Home Movie" market is still quite strong for Super 8. In the U.S., the mass market of amateurs moved to video camcorders in the last decade, which left Super 8 film in the hands of serious independent filmmakers. They choose Kodak's reversal films for beauty, economy, portability, posterity and to own low-cost means of production. Filmmakers who record direct sound on film for personal documentary or experimental narrative work were particularly upset at Kodak's news.

"Kodak's pre-striped sound films are the finest quality sound we can get," says Danny Plotnick,



Super 8 filmmaker and education director at Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco. "It seems like Kodak doesn't realize what sound Super 8 offers filmmakers. I'm afraid Kodak may be shooting itself in the foot," he continues, "as Super 8 with sound is a great point of entry into filmmaking by younger and avant-garde filmmakers. I taught a class of teenagers last summer who had never made their own films before. They were incredibly excited to see their movies on a screen."

Experimental filmmaker and teacher Saul Levine points out, "This really hurts me as a filmmaker. I've worked 20 years making Super 8 sound films. At Massachusetts College of Art we teach single-system sound Super 8 and have steadily

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increased the number of students each year. Sound Super 8 is the way a number of great artists work, like Pelle Lowe, Anne Robertson, Luther Price, and Nina Fonoroff. I'd urge filmmakers to protest."

Simultaneously—and evidently independent of any grassroots movement now growing in the U.S.—a petition arrived from the French group ART'thémis, which runs a Super 8 festival in Tours. In addition to calling for a demonstration on April 4th outside Kodak's premises in Paris, they are circulating a petition that reads like a Super 8 Manifesto. It concludes, "Because we want a cinema free of financial and institutional censorship, we ask Kodak to take into account our demand to keep on producing Super 8 films."

Kodak's announcement has angered some, depressed others, and focused the attention of all Super 8 filmmakers on strategies to stay alive. Some suggest Kodak's student outreach can reach more youth; some insist Kodak owes it to loyal customers to actively promote Super 8 to the home movie market. Promotion of Kodachrome with its unique preservation qualities seems timely for the Centennial of Motion Pictures and the Millenium. It looks like an easy sell in the best interests of both the company and the filmmakers. Whatever ideas work, it's clear the future of Super 8 depends on increased filmmaking to stimulate "reasonable market demand" and keep Kodak committed.

TONI TREADWAY

Toni Treadway is half of Brodsky & Treadway, specializing in 8mm film to tape, and is editor of a newsletter on 8mm film, B&T's Little Film Notebook.

MEDIA NEWS

Shorts Unspool on Pay-Per-View's *Reel Street*

BETTER KNOWN FOR BOXING SPECIALS THAN FOR CUTTING edge film fare, pay-per-view TV tread new ground last February with *Reel Street: The American Independent Film Festival*. The two-and-a-half-hour special, hosted by veteran independent director Melvin Van Peebles, presented seven unusual shorts by established and emerging filmmakers, including Jane Campion, Danny Aiello, documentarian Roger Sherman, and shorts director James Spione. After a successful first run, Semaphore Entertainment Group (SEG), one of the largest producers of cable programming, is soliciting both completed work and proposals for a second *Reel Street* planned for October 1996.

According to SEG, this is a first: the first film festival on pay-per-view and the first time independent films have been produced specifically for pay-per-view. What is most surprising about this debut is that the pay-per-view industry took a chance on chronically underviewed shorts.

"We decided to do shorts because there are so few outlets for them. No one sees the independent 24-minute film, even the Academy Award winners," says Campbell McLaren, SEG's v.p. of original programming and co-creator of *Reel Street*, along with Robert Meyrowitz, president of SEG. The company is producing the series in association with Liberty Productions and Solomon International Enterprises,

"People in the indie world were shocked," says



director James Spione, who was approached by SEG after they saw his 25-minute dark and evocative drama *Garden* at Sundance last year. "'What? Shorts on pay-per-view?' And the incredible thing is that they are commissioning some of them. I guess they're just not jaded enough yet," Spione jokes.

For *Reel Street*, Spione was given the go-ahead for an adaptation of a short story written by his girlfriend, Sheila Gillooly. SEG provided a production budget of $25,000 for the 26-minute film, *The Playroom*, a psychological drama about a single woman in New York who questions her own sanity when she begins thinking a one-night stand might end in her death.

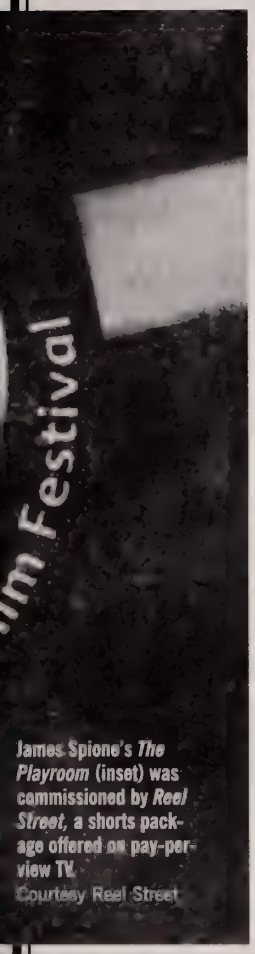
"Since [*Reel Street*] was shown nationwide with several runs, the exposure opportunity was incredible, especially for a short film," said Spione. *Reel Street* was carried by Request Television, Viewer's Choice, and DirecTv and available to 30 million potential viewers. McLaren estimates that 20,000 households nationwide paid to see the program during its run in February and March, with approximately five viewers per household—a number SEG definitely considers successful. The price was $9.95, a good movie-buy rate; a hot sports event can be priced anywhere between $9.95 and $50.

McLaren found the level of support for *Reel Street* in the cable industry overwhelmingly positive. He notes that the success of films like *Pulp Fiction*, which did very well on pay-per-view, have increased cable's interest in independents. By including high profile directors like Jane Campion, SEG hoped to lure those viewers with some general awareness of arthouse and independent films. *Reel Street* included Campion's *Peel*, a nine-minute film from 1982 which won the Palme d'Or at Cannes, about an impasse between couple and their young son over a discarded orange peel during an afternoon drive.

Another drawing card was actor Danny Aiello, who wrote and starred in a farcical commentary on violence called *Save the Rabbits*,

directed by Jean-Pierre Marois.

Reel Street also included several emerging filmmakers, including Kamala Lopez Dawson, writer and producer of a black comedy with the arresting title *I Killed My Lesbian Wife, Hung Her on a Meathook, and Now I Have a Three Picture Deal at Disney*. McLaren saw the title in *Variety*, which had given the film its "Best Title" award at Cannes. SEG then acquired it for a flat fee for *Reel Street*. (The fee paid depends on several factors, including the film's visibility, its budget, and the appropriateness of its subject matter. According to McLaren, *Reel Street*'s fee is competitive—"more than Bravo, I think.")



James Spione's *The Playroom* (inset) was commissioned by *Reel Street*, a shorts package offered on pay-per-view TV.
Courtesy Reel Street

"It's a phenomenal opportunity for filmmakers to have their work seen and recoup some of the money spent," says Lopez Dawson, who produced and funded *Lesbian Wife* under the auspices of her company, Heroica Films. The satire was directed by Ben Affleck and features a vicious director who rivals Kevin Spacey's poisonously vindictive character in *Swimming with Sharks*.

Also shown were New York University film grad Christina Booth's *Norma's Lament*, a sharp comedy about an urban homegirl and her gang, which was proposed in script form and then produced and funded by SEG for the festival; Rahi Hudson's sweet tale of sex and the older couple, *Postplay*; and Roger Sherman (a partner with Ken Burns on *Baseball*), Jerome Liebling, and Buddy Squires' group directing effort, *Fast Eddie and the Boys*, a documentary about aging handball players.

The second *Reel Street* will follow a similar format, mixing known and up-and-coming filmmakers. McLaren says they will be working with a loose theme of "an urban vision," but will consider "any commentary on where we stand at the end of the twentieth century in America." They are partial to comedies and are even considering a separate comedy version of the festival. As before, they will pay an acquisition fee for completed work and will consider scripts and proposals for

MEDIA NEWS

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INGALISA SCHROBSDORFF

Ingalisa Schrobsdorff is a graduate student in New York University's Cinema Studies program.

ITVS Creates Anthology Showcase

LIKE AN ODDLY-PATTERNED PIECE OF FURNITURE IN A well coordinated room, or a brilliant lyric that won't match the rhythm of a song, an experimental media production can often be hard to place on the public airwaves. The Independent Television Service (ITVS) faces this dilemma on a regular basis. Created by Congress to foster diversity in public television programming, ITVS has funded more than 100 independent productions since 1991.

But ITVS was designed as more than just another funding entity. The organization is also responsible for packaging its projects and promoting them to public television to make sure they reach an audience. ITVS has successfully landed many of its programs on PBS affiliates, either for stand-alone individual broadcasts or within suitable existing vehicles such as the anthology series *P.O.V.*



Sophia Ramos (left) and Carmelita Tropicana (right) in Ela Troyano's *Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffen*, one of several unconventional works appearing in the five-part ITVS "telefest" series, *American Independents*. Photo: Paula Court, courtesy ITVS

Some ITVS-supported works have had a hard time making it to television, however, due to their experimental styles or controversial content. That's why the organization created *American Independents*, an upcoming series of ITVS-funded productions linked only by their resistance to easy categorization.

"Experimental work is difficult for programmers to place because it looks different. It's not the usual kind of thing seen on public television," says Gayle Loeber, Acting Director of Broadcast Marketing and Promotions for ITVS. "We thought by creating a series, wrapping the programs, and providing some context for them, we could facilitate broadcast of the programs."

American Independents marks only the second time ITVS has created a series to distribute works previously completed as individual programs. The first, *Animated Women*, presented animation projects by female producers. Other ITVS series, including *Declarations: Essays on American Ideals*, the teen-produced *The Ride*, and *Positive: Life with HIV*, were designed as such from the outset, with funding awarded to projects tailored towards the series' specifications. The latest example of such a series, *Signal to Noise: Life with Television*, will be broadcast nationally in primetime by PBS on July 11, 18, and 25.

ITVS likens *American Independents* to a film festival held over the airwaves, giving viewers an opportunity to sample a variety of work selected for its quality and originality. Six programs have been assembled, each of which includes one or two independent productions chosen by a curatorial committee made up of Gene Bunge, Director of Programming for Nebraska ETV; Ed Clay, Station Manager of WOSU/WPBO in Columbus, Ohio; Natatcha Estébanez, an independent producer; Jackie Kain, Director of Broadcasting for KCET in Los Angeles; and Bart Weiss, curator of the Dallas Video Festival and AIVF board member.

For the most part, the eclectic mix work in *American Independents* eschews traditional narrative forms and linear storytelling. The series will offer doses of drama, documentary, animation, puppetry, and dance, while touching on subjects ranging from ecology to racial stereotypes to family relationships to gender identity to Christopher Columbus. Even the program lengths are unconventional. Episodes run from approximately 60 to 90 minutes, with one lasting just 80 minutes, making it difficult to fit within the half-hour blocks of a typical television schedule.

The series will pose further scheduling challenges because of provocative elements such as strong language and nudity in some episodes. ITVS is confident, however, that stations will find appropriate timeslots for these programs, most likely late at night and perhaps even as the last show of the day, which would also accommodate the series' varied running times. Stations may elect to broadcast only some of the *American Independents* programs.

Interest in experimental media is growing, says Loeber, but the available venues remain few and far between. By distributing *American Independents*, ITVS hopes both to satisfy an existing appetite for such work and create a taste for it among members of a wider audience.

"There are a lot of experimental filmmakers out there," Loeber says. "There is some great work being done, and ITVS has funded some of it, and we'd like people to see it."

American Program Service (APS), a major source of programming for public television stations nationwide, is distributing *American Independents*. The shows were made available to public television stations May 1 and may be run any time over a three-year period. Loeber hopes episodes will begin to air on some stations this summer.

If the first six programs of the series are well received, more may follow. ITVS is already assembling a potential second season, which would again include unconventional works produced through the organization's existing funding mechanisms. Film- and videomakers may not apply for financing to produce pieces specifically for the series. For more information about *American Independents* or other ITVS programs, call (612) 225-9035, send e-mail to itvs@itvs.org, or visit the organization's Web site at http://www.itvs. org/ITVS.

SCOTT BRIGGS

Scott Briggs is a writer/producer/director based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The premiere season of *American Independents*:

- ***Fresh Kill*, by Shu Lea Cheang**
- ***Body of Correspondence*, by Ruth Ozeki Lounsbury and Marina Zurkow**
- ***Memory of Fire*, by Edin Velez *Jump Fence*, by Alfred Hernandez**
- ***Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffen*, and *Once Upon a Time in the Bronx*, by Ela Troyano**
- ***My Three Fathers*, by Lisa Marie Russo**
- ***Heroine of Hell*, by Nietzchka Keene**

Sequels

The **National Endowment for the Humanities,** forced by Federal budget cuts to internally restructure in a manner similar to the NEA [see "NEA on the Edge: Discipline Programs Dismantled," Jan./Feb. 1996], has "bundled" its media program into its museum and exhibitions program. Last year these two categories had approximately $10.5 million each, but this year they will receive $9.5 million for both combined. Overall, the NEH's budget was reduced this fiscal year by 36 percent, from $172 million to $110 million, according to NEH spokesman Jim Turner.

The new review process for the new museums and media category is not yet set, says Turner, and concedes it is a "knotty issue." "That is still shaking down. There's going to have to be collaboration as to how they bundle [these areas], since a curator of museums is not going to have understanding of how to produce a television documentary."

As to how small independents will compete with public television giants, major museums, and libraries under the new system, Turner says, "I don't know how the factor of size of applying organization will affect the application." But he adds that any small groups who propose "something new or unusual to public understanding of the humanities which is accessible to the public will get full consideration."

The competition at the NEH will definitely be tougher than it has been. "We don't expect to see a reduction in applications. It'll make the review process agonizing. Highly qualified projects are going to be turned down, [or] we'll have to give them a reduced amount, which throws a burden on the applicant."

•

JOHN MALONE'S TELE-COMMUNICATIONS INC. (TCI), the largest cable multi-system operator in the U.S. with over 14 million subscribers nationwide, has gone one step further in its crusade for conservative political programming. TCI has been negotiating to get two new shows, *Damn Right* and *Race for the Presidency*, through CNBC and its sister network, America's Talking, which reach 56 million and 20 million viewers respectively. Currently, the two shows run on low visibility networks.

Though TCI had no qualms last year about axing from its line-up **The 90s Channel** ["The 90's Channel's Challenge," July 1995], a liberal public affairs programming channel, *Variety* reported that TCI is playing hard ball with NBC to get the two new conservative shows a national audience. When CNBC declined to offer the two shows, TCI threatened to stop America's Talking's plans to turn into an all-news channel, MS/NBC, a joint venture of Microsoft and NBC scheduled to start this summer.

Race for the Presidency is a weekly hour-long program with political analysis, field reports and interviews, highlighted by a 24-minute unedited spot from presidential candidates. *Damn Right*, the more openly conservative of the two, is a five night per week half-hour show that sprinkles serious discussion with comedy sketches.

•

After a southern PBS station turned it down, a network affiliate has pulled through for ***The Uprising of 1934***, a 90-minute video by documentary activist George Stoney and Judith Helfand about the 1934 General Textile Strike in the South ["Talking Heads," Oct. 1995]. Although the documentary was aired on *P.O.V.* in July 1995, South Carolina Educational Television denied it a local airing, citing scheduling conflicts. The producers believe the station was balking due to the politically sensitive nature of the material on the strike. The NBC affiliate WYFF, serving Piedmont, SC, broadcast the program on April 14 at 11:30 p.m. The WYFF airing occurred as a result of local unions, lawyers, and professors purchasing air time (at discounted rates) for the documentary.

•

FILM/AUDIO SERVICES RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THE creation of "Stock Yards," a new division offering a wide variety of low-priced proprietary rights footage. Owned by **Bob Sommers**, coproducer of *The Gringo in Mañanaland* ["From Yesterday to Mañana: The Making of *The Gringo in Mañanaland*," Dec. 1995], Stock Yards has more than 10,000 hours of footage, much of it rare. Stock Yards has everything from post-War Europe and Asia to travel films of war-time South America to outtakes from documentaries produced by award-winning independent filmmakers.

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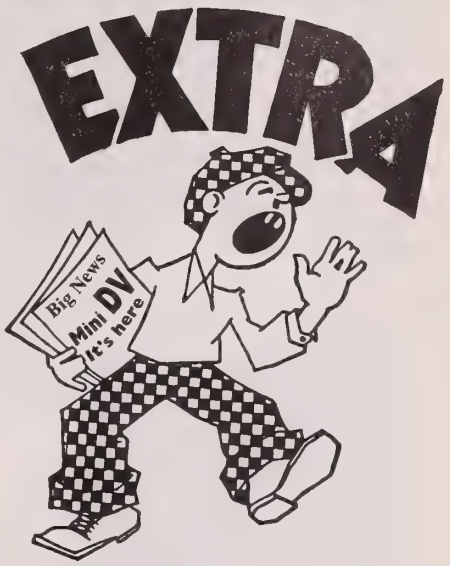
FILM/VIDEO ARTS HAS LAUNCHED A NEW PROGRAM for certificates in film and video production ["Media News," May 1995]. The program, started in February, offers day and evening classes leading to certificates in Film and Video Production, Film Production, Screenwriting, Production Management and Directing, and Video Editing. (212) 673-9361.

•

THE TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL HAS MADE an effort in its second year to literally build an independent filmmakers' community in New Mexico. The festival's top prize is five acres of land on the Taos Mesa.

Gary Alan Walkow (*Notes from Underground*), won the award during the festival, which occurred

MEDIA NEWS



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The P.O.V. Online Experiment by Don Adams & Arlene Goldbard; $5.00 incl. postage & handling $_____

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on April 18-21. The prize, the first of 10 five-acre plots to be awarded over the next 10 years of the festival, was donated by independent filmmaker Jeff Jackson. The two other finalists were Bruce Sweeney for *Live Bait*, and Mark Rappaport for *From the Journals of Jean Seberg*.

The idea for the Land Grant came during one of Jackson's getaway trips to Taos, after he used profits from selling land in Taos to fund his feature-length documentary *Death and Taxes*.

After conferring with Josh Bryant, one of the producers of the festival, Jackson decided to award the yearly grant in order to "create a little filmmakers' colony." Jackson says the "long tradition of artists in Taos" make it a great place to get away and write, or a great place to shoot.

Jackson also wanted to help the new fest, now in its second year, "to grow and give it stature internationally." Jackson hopes the land will also help the town economically.

The land is estimated at $25,000, says Jackson, but the festival will ask the winner to not sell the land for at least five years, in order to give Taos a try as a place to live.

•

INDEPENDENT FILM- AND VIDEOMAKERS LIVING IN the West can get low-cost expert advice through the **Western States Arts Federation's (WESTAF) Circuit Riders Program.** Designed to help people with "the business of art," the Circuit Riders program has advised artists on marketing, fundraising, distribution, project design, and setting up business plans. After the artist has a short phone interview with program coordinator Diane Barnes, WESTAF sends the resumes of possible consultants from WESTAF's list of about 100 (five are specialists in media). The artist then chooses the consultant and only pays for phone bills; WESTAF pays the consultant's fee.

Circuit Riders, started in January 1995, is part of WESTAF's Professional Development Services, which assists artists in almost every discipline. The only catch: The program is only available to residents of the 12 Western states (AL, AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, and WY). For further information, contact: (508) 988-116; staff@westaf.org.

Errata

The article on Jim McKay's film *Girls Town* [April] erroneously identified actress Aunjanue Ellis as Denise Hernandez. Ellis plays the role of Nikki in the film. Hernandez, who does not appear in *Girls Town*, is one of the screenwriters. In addition, we omitted a credit for Phyllis Belkin, the photographer of the cover shot and the *Girls Town* stills. We regret these errors.

MEDIA NEWS

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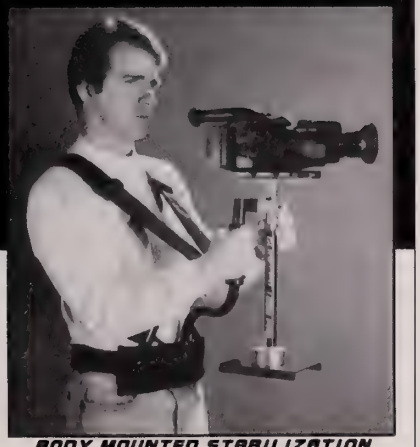
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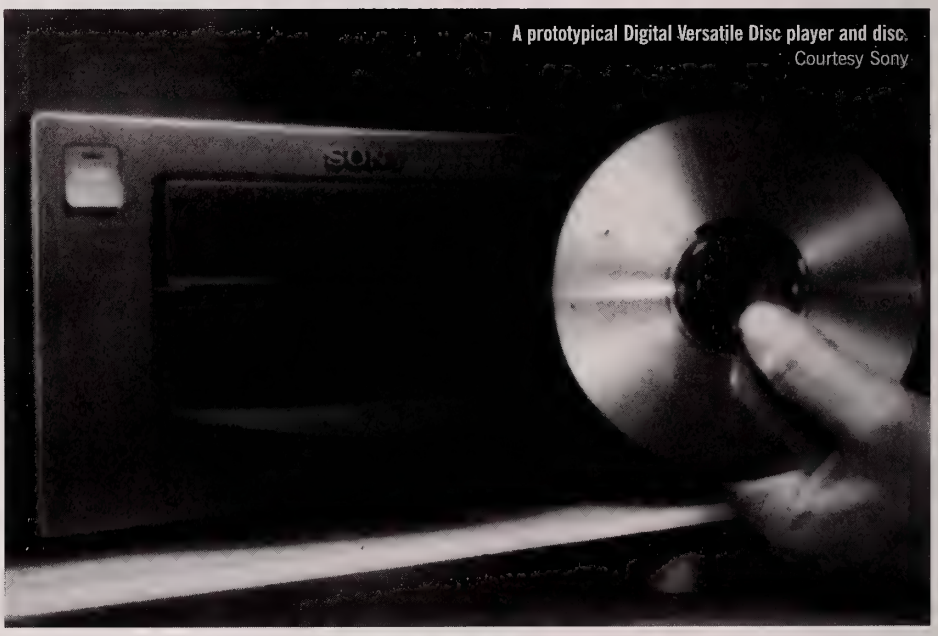
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Wired Blue Yonder

The Digital Versatile Disc

It's the Compact Disc That Does It All. But Does the Public Want It?

BY LUKE HONES



A prototypical Digital Versatile Disc player and disc. Courtesy Sony

A DVD HOLDS 4.7 GIGABYTES OF DATA, AS MUCH AS SEVEN CD-ROMs. THAT'S ENOUGH TO CONTAIN A 133-MINUTE MOVIE.

IN 1988, I WITNESSED A ROW AT CAPTAIN VIDEO, my neighborhood movie rental store. A customer was arguing loudly with the clerk about the new rental policy: VHS only, no Betamax.

Customer: Betamax is a better format.

Clerk: You're the only one who has it.

Whether it's candy bars or VCRs, the product that wins is the one that is accepted by the public. Quality is a factor, but so are packaging, marketing, timing, and luck. Currently there is a big push in the consumer electronics market to introduce a new format for videos, a digital CD-sized disc called the Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), and while its features are promising, its future is a mystery.

Luckily, DVD proponents have already avoided the type of product-killing behavior consumer electronics is known for. First, given the opportunity to market two competing formats, rival companies opted to work together. Second, unlike discs that can only be used for one thing, DVD is a format that has a number of uses, including home video, music, and computer software, which can even be combined on the same disc.

DVDs are 5-inch discs, the same size as audio CDs and much smaller than 12-inch laserdiscs. In December, 1994, Sony and Phillips, who own the basic patents to the compact disc and its larger variation, were the first to propose a Digital Video Disc (what the acronym DVD originally stood for). They thought they were the only DVD developers until, to their surprise, Toshiba and Time Warner announced a competing DVD format that came with the backing of many major entertainment interests: MCA, MGM/UA, Turner Home Entertainment, Warner Bros., Panasonic, RCA, GE, Pioneer, Hitachi, JVC, and Denon.

With the Toshiba/Time Warner axis ahead in Hollywood, the Sony/Phillips team went to Silicon Valley, hoping to give their DVD format a head start in the race to replace CD-ROMs. The two sides started sniping, and it began to look like the twelfth battle of the Betamax/VHS war—until the computer industry stepped in. In a statement signed by representatives of Hewlett Packard, IBM, Apple, Compaq, Microsoft, and others, the industry refused to choose between the competing formats and said that "consumers, software and content providers, and hardware manufacturers would be best served" by one agreed-upon format. The computer industry also provided a list of nine objectives for the new format, a list that proved instrumental in the development of DVDs:

1. A single interchange standard for entertainment and computer applications
2. Backward compatibility with existing CDs
3. Forward compatibility with future recordable CDs
4. A single file system for all uses and combinations of uses
5. Cost comparable with existing CD-ROM drives and discs
6. No CD caddy
7. Reliable storage and retrieval with average uncorrectable errors no greater than that of existing CDs
8. Capability to accommodate future capacity increases, such as multiple data layers or blue lasers
9. High performance for both sequential (movies) and nonsequential (random access data) files

With this list in hand, the two adversaries created a new consortium. In December 1995, a compromise format was agreed upon, and it was announced that DVD now stood for Digital Versatile Disc.

A DVD holds 4.7 gigabytes of data, as much as seven CD-ROMs. That's enough to contain one movie with a running time of 133 minutes. According to Toshiba, the DVD movie discs have the capability to present soundtracks in eight different languages and up to 32 sets of subtitles. At the 1995 Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Nissim

Corporation demonstrated a DVD player that allows viewers to choose a film's level of sexual explicitness with the push of a button. Also, DVD players are designed to be backwardly compatible with audio CDs and some video game CDs, so your old purchases won't gather dust. But in the future, for $20-$30 you may be buying the movie, the game, and the soundtrack all on one disc.

DVDs can also offer multiple aspect ratios of the same movie, providing versions in letterbox (which shows the full 16:9 film image on your 4:3 TV set, with black borders on top and bottom); in 4:3 (known as pan-and-scan, because the original movie has to be transferred to video by panning and scanning during scenes where the action is off the video screen); and in 16:9, the anticipated new ratio for large-format home televisions.

IF THE INDUSTRY CAN GET THEIR AUDIO CD CAMPAIGN MATERIALS OUT OF THE ATTIC AND DUST THEM OFF, THEY MIGHT USE THIS STRATEGY TO KILL OFF VHS.

While many people believe that discs have a greater shelf-life than tapes, this remains something of an unproved urban myth and seems to be contradicted by the number of unplayable early audio CDs and laserdiscs. However, because discs don't have a tape path to negotiate, the wear and tear on DVDs will be less than on VHS tapes. And the industry promises no dropouts.

Nevertheless, is DVD really going to make it in the consumer market? There are two schools of thought.

The Betamax vs. VHS School

They tried to kill it with laserdiscs. They tried to kill it with S-VHS. But it wouldn't die. VHS seems indestructible. Despite grousing about having to rewind tapes, most people seem happy with VHS. In fact, even while "home theater" is the big sales concept being pushed by the consumer electronics industry, only about a third of all buyers have opted for stereo-audio VCRs. Does the consumer really need another box on top of the TV?

At the first annual Laserdisc Conference and Exhibition in May, 1995, most panelists believed that DVD units could quickly surpass the base of laserdisc players. Big deal. That's about two million sales to date, compared to around 170 million VHS decks. Some pundits weren't even that optimistic, predicting sales of around 250,000 a year.

A key factor is whether DVDs will be recordable, which will only happen if the manufacturers can resolve copyright issues. That sounds like we could be in for a Digital Audio Tape (DAT) deja vu. Because its reproduction of sound was so good, DAT got stalled in the lab and never made it to the mass market.

The LP Record vs. Audio CD School

The release of audio CDs was orchestrated to kill LP records. If the industry can get their audio CD campaign materials out of the attic and dust them off, they might use this strategy to kill off VHS.

This seems to be the industry's plan. Many of the members of the consortium are both equipment manufacturers and content providers. They could decide to subsidize the cost of a DVD player unit (which will otherwise retail for around $500-$600), bring the price in line with VCRs, and make up the loss with movie disc sales. Another advantage DVD has over VHS is that it is convergence technology. Toshiba predicts that it will have annual global sales of around 120 million DVD players in the year 2000, with 80 million of these being DVD-ROM drives in computers. Remember DVD's middle name is "versatile." The duplication houses are already starting up. Months before a shipping date for the first players, Sony has begun to ready its Digital Audio Disc Corporation to produce 50 titles immediately. In late 1996 Time Warner said it will release 250 movie titles to coincide with the release of the first DVD players.

WHO WINS IF THIS FORMAT SHUFFLE WORKS? I'M sure there will be a morsel for just about everyone. Independent producers, of course, will have a more flexible and higher quality format for distribution. However, the payoff for independent works will probably be as anemic as the big home market, cable TV, and multimedia El Dorados of the last decade and a half. As one independent distributor noted, technology isn't going to save independent production; audiences will.

A different cautionary remark about new technology comes from an unexpected source. David Goodman, president of U.S. Laser Video Distributors, said about DVDs: "Electronic companies continually develop new products. They give this technology to their sales and marketing departments who then figure out how to create a demand for the product in the market. It's not so much the public needing the product as it is these companies telling us we need the product."

Oh, so that's how it works.

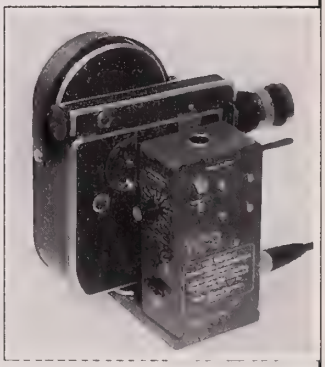
Luke Hones (videonetwork.com) researches, writes, and speaks about community use of old and new technology. He is director of research and development at the Bay Area Video Coalition.

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DEEP DIVER AT THE MIT THINK TANK

Glorianna Davenport Helms the Media Lab's Interactive Cinema Group

BY GEORGE FIFIELD

WIRED BLUE YONDER

GLORIANNA DAVENPORT RECALLS THE MOMENT she first started thinking about interactivity and cinema. In the early seventies, she was a young itinerant filmmaker, traveling across the country arranging small screenings of her work. During one show in Los Angeles before a group of children, things took an unexpected turn. "The kids were totally uninterested in my movies the way they were," she remembers. "What they loved was the fact that they could put the projector in forward, put it in rewind, and go into the sound machine and rewind it. Well, it was quite a session—an hour of not seeing any film that I had made. But what was fun was the excitement of interaction and discovery."

Today, as director the Interactive Cinema Group (ICG) within the famed Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Davenport oversees an equally inventive, though somewhat older, group of students who are also involved in the process of discovery. But their projects have had resounding implications for mediamakers all over the country. Davenport and her graduate students came up with a number of the basic concepts that we see in today's nonlinear editing programs. Davenport recalls, "We took a nonlinear prototype system to [the National Association of Broadcasters' convention] in 1986. We used picture-based retrieval, description based retrieval, and we had a picture time line." Their current work may further revolutionize digital editing, providing it with a level of artificial intelligence, among other capabilities.

Key to many of their ideas is the computer's ability to store vast amounts of digital video information. Today's nonlinear editing programs help an editor select and rearrange clips from these databases or "mediabanks" to create a finished piece which is then viewed by an audience. ICG is working on programs that allow the viewer of the future to interact creatively with an entire database, exploring and learning from the video in unique, intuitive ways.

It is this goal behind the Interactive Cinema department's concept of "evolving documentaries" or what Davenport calls "growing news." These projects allow a nonfiction media project to be built and viewed at the same time. New footage and ideas are added to an existing interactive program in a way that makes them instantly available.



Hot off the Web: Glorianna Davenport, director of MIT's Interactive Cinema Group (ICG), and their Video Streamer editing device. Courtesy MIT Media Lab

One such evolving documentary is *Boston: Renewed Vistas*, designed by Davenport and Michael Murtaugh and run by a program called ConTour. The piece is about a huge highway construction project now underway in downtown Boston, known as the "Big Dig." This $10.4-billion highway project is the largest in the history of the United States, and as such, it will be a continuing story for many years, containing many people—residents, workers, politicians—and many themes. Davenport is hoping for a museum environment for the project. "What would be great is if the content of that project could grow into the next century." She adds, "The project won't really track the artery as a project, what it will try to track is people's memories and impressions about that place over time. So you won't have closure until 2004," when the Big Dig is finished.

The new imagery is being added and categorized as the Big Dig continues. As new video is shot, each scene is assigned key words by the filmmakers based on content and added to the growing mediabank. For instance, a shot of former Boston Mayor Kevin White talking about resident displacement during a press conference in the eighties is described and stored using the categories of character (White, a politician), time (the year), location (Boston City Hall), and theme (resident displacement).

At this point the mediabank becomes useful. ConTour is an elegant interface, not unlike today's CD-ROMs, that allows the viewer to move a mouse over the many categories. When a subject is selected, relevant video clips are displayed. But unlike present interactive media, when the viewer moves on to another category, their past thematic concerns are "remembered" by the program. As a result, categories that receive a lot of attention stay on the screen and unexplored category names literally fade from the screen like the Cheshire Cat. An intuitive interaction grows between the database and the viewer as ConTour begins to "understand" the viewer's concerns. It is then able to select clips that represent the viewer's present inquiries in light of his or her past concerns.

This has implications for the development of an intelligent computerized editor. Such a program might suggest the next shot in a sequence based on its understanding of the context of that sequence—useful when working with a collection of thousands of hours of tape. Work has been done in the past at ICG on intelligent editors by Mark Davis and Lee Morgenroth, and Davenport points out that "story discovery and editing are flip sides of some of the same computational issues."

Intelligent computerized editing systems can also be used for the creation of interactive fiction films—something ICG has in mind with its "Logboy and FilterGirl project." These cutely named programs (designed by Ryan Evans) can create various fictional narratives from the same databank of video clips, entertaining different viewers according to their predilections.

A more complex example of an interactivity is the project entitled "Lurker," by Lee Morgenroth, Richard Lachman, and Davenport which is available to play on the Internet. Multiple participants anywhere in the world can work together to solve a "mystery." When you sign up (register to play the game at the "Lurker" home page: http://lurker.www.media

.mit.edu/registration/), you and five others are presented with a story that evolves over several days through e-mail and video clips which you "receive" from the story's characters. The networked participants must interact to help the characters solve multiple mysteries. Unlike most interactive entertainment, which stresses simple navigation and problem solving, this project encourages participants scattered around the world to communicate and cooperate with one other.

In light of all of ICG's cutting-edge computer interfaces, the hardware they use is notably low format. Working mostly on Macintosh computers and shooting in Hi8, the ICG department produces many projects that have a distinctly home movie feel, a quality Davenport encourages. She herself has shot many small-format movies and for years has kept video diaries. And she thinks of ICG's prospective beneficiaries as mom-and-pop mediamakers, talking frequently about how to place future tools into the hands of consumer videographers. "Home movies are interesting because the people who are near to the movie are always going to be interested in what the different characters are. To make a home movie that goes out of the media locus of the characters means that you have to create sort of a myth of culture or a myth of history, and certainly a lot of documentaries are about that."

One tool designed to make video easier to manipulate is the Video Streamer, designed by Eddie Elliott. It is a way to visually grasp the contents of an entire block of raw video at once. Video Streamer presents the video on the computer screen as a extruded cube of images, where the long dimension represents time. The stream of video can be raced through backwards and forwards, and clicking on a selection exports that amount as a QuickTime movie. Video Streamer is one way to intuitively interact with video while editing.

Ultimately, on all these projects, Davenport's idea is to engage the viewer. "There are certain types of stories where, if the audience can probe according to things they know about, they come away more interested, more satisfied, more turned on," she explains. "[As] a filmmaker, that to me is a goal—to get the audience turned on, whatever it takes. I guess I don't think that happens in a static form as much as it can happen in a dynamic form."

ICG, The Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 20 Ames St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-4307; http://ic.www.media.mit.edu/index.html.

George Fifield (gwf@tiac.net) is a video artist, adjunct media arts curator at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, and director of VideoSpace, an alternative media arts organization in Boston.

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Field Reports

Scaling the Heights

The Aspen Shortsfest



Clockwise from top: A colorful moment from *Pig!*, writer-director Francine McDougall's humorous short based on an urban legend; checker players in Gina Guerrieri's *Make Room for Mario*; and Mark O'Brien, a Berkeley-based poet, journalist, and disabled rights advocate, the focus of Jessica Yu's *Breathing Lessons: The Life & Work of Mark O'Brien*. "[At bigger festivals] everyone is usually fairly busy doing interviews or trying to meet certain people," says McDougall. "That doesn't go on in Aspen. You were hanging out with the filmmakers." Courtesy filmmakers

BY WILL ANNETT

"IT'S NOT EASY TO GET HERE," SAYS LAURA Thielen, the new executive director of the Aspen Filmfest and Shortsfest. "We're at the top of the world." The narrow winding road leading to this elite mountain community is often treacherous in winter. Nestled in the high end of Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley at the foot of Independence Pass, the quaint Victorian village is buffeted by frequent snow storms, blessing Aspen with some of the best skiing and priciest real estate in the world. It can be a difficult journey, but once travelers reach this exotic spot they may be reluctant to leave.

The uphill climb is an apt metaphor for the struggle directors of short films face in today's feature-driven market. It's a difficult road. Venues are far and few between, and when film festivals present shorts at all, they very often use them as filler between feature presentations.

Aspen's small but significant forum, the Shortsfest, is one of a handful in the United States catering exclusively to shorts, a film form that continues to boom despite the limited markets. Indeed, this year the festival received so many entries, it strained the resources of a largely volunteer staff. Weeding through 550 films to select just 44 for awards and presentation was a grueling, often heartbreaking task for the screening committee.

"It must be enormously frustrating for people who work in the short form not to get their films seen," says Thielen, who took the reins of the festival this year after a decade as Program Director of the San Francisco International Film Festival. During her tenure at the Shortsfest, the new director wants to increase the presence of foreign filmmakers.

"By expanding the program and making it an international showcase, we serve the cause of all independent filmmakers," Thielen observes. "I think it's important for an audience to experience the best of short film production. That means it has to be international." Nonetheless, she emphasizes that domestic independents will always find a home in Aspen.

The festival's winning films examine aspects of life rarely addressed in the multiplexes, from adolescent bulimia to nursing home alienation. "In the short form there is a real focus on people. The films tend to be issue oriented and deal with very human problems. They seem somehow more linked to human experience," Thielen says.

Thielen left San Francisco after she began to feel crowded by her own success. Although seeing attendance at the San Francisco International Film Festival soar to over 70,000 was statistically gratifying, she sensed the festival was losing its human scale. In Aspen she saw an opportunity to reclaim some of the magic that drew her to film in the first place.

The Aspen Shortsfest, now in its fifth season, grew out of the Aspen Filmfest (to be held September 25 through 29), which was founded 17 years ago by Ellen Hunt and Gail Holstein and quickly became a community institution. "We wanted a special forum just for short film," says Hunt, who now leads the transition team assisting Thielan during her first year. "Shorts are a wonderful and unique art form, but they're under appreciated next to features. Our idea was to give them the attention they deserved."

During this year's three-day festival (held February 22 to 25), evening viewings at the historic Wheeler Opera House were sold out. The fully restored Victorian-era facility boasts state of the art projection equipment for 16mm and 35mm. The acoustics are excellent, providing sound that is crisp and resonant.



Nestled in the high end of Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley, this quaint Victorian village is home to the Aspen Filmfest and Shortsfest.

Photo: Will Annett

Eagerly anticipated all year, the Shortsfest creates a palpable sense of excitement among festival patrons. Audiences clap after each film, often howling and cheering. Afterwards, they eagerly engage filmmakers during question-and-answer sessions, panel discussions, and while mingling in the Wheeler's elegant lobby.

Cinemagoers, many of them locals and some of them voting members of the Academy, have a reverential attitude about attendance. One woman went so far as to apologize to a filmmaker because she had missed a single program.

"The Aspen Filmfest is Aspen," Hunt says. "They own it. They love it!"

It is this homey, intimate atmosphere that festival organizers and filmgoers want to preserve. Aspen is neither a schmooze mecca nor an industry encampment. Absent are harried executives nervously pacing the streets with cellular phones. Although the town provides a second home to many industry professionals, Aspen's film festivals are deliberately non-industry events. Certainly career boosts and connections have originated in Aspen, but such events are more by accident than design.

Francine McDougall, producer of *Pig!*, a humorous short based on an urban legend, was an exception to the rule. Producers of a projected variety show for Fox-TV became interested in McDougall's concept after hearing about it via contacts at Shortsfest. McDougall is currently negotiating development of a series of urban myth films.

Significantly, it was interaction with other filmmakers that McDougall found to be the most enriching and rewarding aspect of her experience in Aspen.

"You don't normally mix [at bigger festivals.] Everyone is usually fairly busy. They're doing interviews or trying to meet certain people. That doesn't go on in Aspen. You were hanging out with the filmmakers." In fact, McDougall and filmmaker Jessica Yu, who met during the festival, plan to collaborate on future projects.

"Aspen is a very safe environment for new filmmakers," says Thielen. "There isn't a lot of noise. It's more collegial than competitive."

Competition, albeit friendly, does exist, and Shortsfest offers substantial cash prizes. While the fest has different prize categories—i.e. Grand Prize, Special Jury Award, Horizon Award, Best Short Short, Best Student Film, Animated Eye Award, and Special Recognition—it does not break them into separate viewing categories. (The only exception is Kidsfest, currently shown as an afternoon matinee.) This year, the $7,000 Grand Prize went to Leslie Libman and Larry William's *Strange Habit*, a sensitive narrative dealing with bulimia. The $2,000 Horizon Award went to Yu's *Breathing Lessons*, a remarkably poignant documentary about the life of a paraplegic man confined to an iron lung.

Yu, whose film also won this year's Audience Award, was surprised by the enthusiasm with which her film was embraced. "It was the kind of film festival that spoils you," she says. "Because it's small and compact, it lives up to the ideal of what you hope a festival can be. Since every film only shows once, there's packed houses. It offers very strong community support. All those things you

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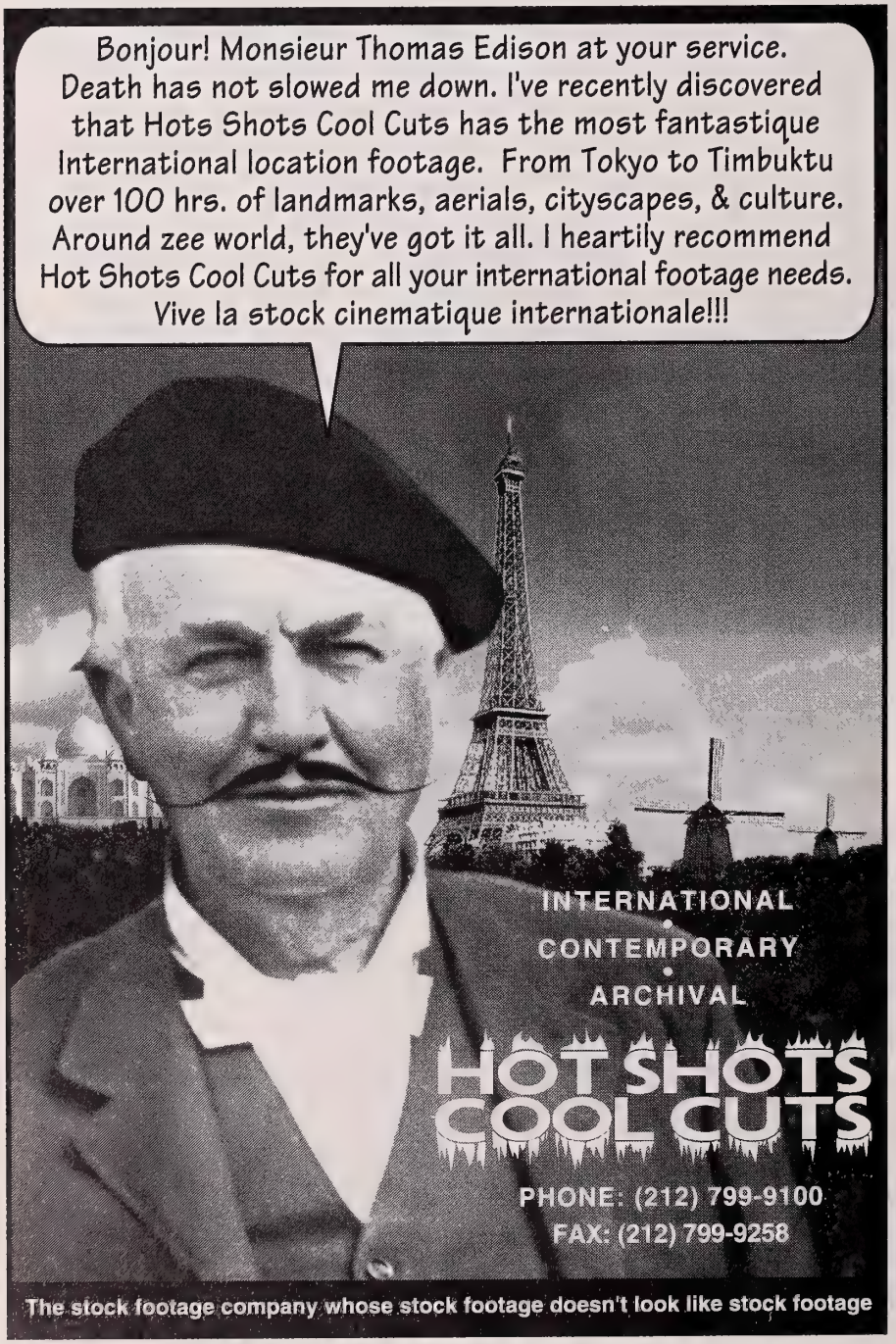
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can't do on a larger scale."

When bad weather prevented Gina Guerrieri from attending the premiere of her short, *Make Room for Mario*, winner of Best Student Film, the last thing the filmmaker expected was any special consideration. So when Thielen arranged to show the film again after Guerrieri finally made it to Aspen, the recent grad of Colombia's film program was astonished. "I was treated like royalty. They pulled out the red carpet and made you feel very special as a filmmaker."

Carol Halstead, the Canadian director of *Why*, an autobiographical animation about an older woman struggling to be an artist, praised Aspen's style. "Having my film shown at Sundance was a wonderful honor," she says. "But I was lost in the crowd. I didn't get to interact with filmgoers. But here it's different. Everyone wants to know you."

In keeping with the community's high-minded tradition of artistic patronage, festival organizers provide filmmakers with accommodations in private residences and treat them to meals, entertainment, and recreation. The relaxed encounters inspired considerable camaraderie. Thielen believes that Aspen's laid-back atmosphere and ethic of generous sharing promise exciting possibilities for the future.

"One of the things that's unique about Aspen is that it's beautifully situated and there are not a lot of distractions," Thielen says. The natural splendor of the region presents a creatively inspiring home for film artists.

Eventually, she wants to incorporate a filmmaker's symposium where filmmakers can examine intellectual and pragmatic aspects of their craft. "As we develop, and funding increases for Shortsfest, it could be a great place for filmmakers to come together, share concerns, ideas, and make connections."

Ultimately, Thielen believes the cinema of tomorrow depends upon the children of today. Despairing about the lack of quality films available to youngsters in America, she developed Kidsfest as a companion to Shortsfest. Held as a Sunday afternoon matinee during the shorts festival, Thielan hopes the venue will expand to longer programs in coming years. Intended to expose children to the world's wide variety of cultures and ideas, Thielen hopes the program instills a lifelong love of good cinema. More than that, she hopes the films will inspire a generation of tolerant and accepting world citizens. If the current success of Shortsfest is any gauge, she may be closer to realizing that goal than she knows.

Will Annett is a freelance writer specializing in entertainment and telecommunications. He writes a film column for the Boulder Weekly *and lives in Colorado.*

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Missing Media at the Media & Democracy Congress

BY BARBARA BLISS OSBORN

NEARLY 700 PROGRESSIVE JOURNALISTS, VIDEO and filmmakers, on-line designers, and activists from around the country gathered in San Francisco from February 29 to March 3 to swap business cards, war stories, and Pat Buchanan jokes. The Media & Democracy Congress, whose coordinating sponsor was the Institute for Alternative Journalism (IAJ), brought organizers and media-makers together in a rare opportunity to take stock of progressive politics' tattered state and how media might help bring it back to life.



A quick glance at the list of conference attendees made it obvious that alternative film- and video-makers played a relatively minor role. While *The Nation*, *The Progressive*, *Mother Jones*, *Utne Reader*, and other alternative publications spin out high-quality, alternative viewpoints (for the most part on a self-sustaining basis), independent producers are lucky if they can raise the money to produce a program and still luckier if they can get it on the air.

Why hasn't independent film and video assumed a role comparable to alternative print media? Is it simply an example of "freedom of the press for those who own one?" Many at the Congress thought so.

The unequal relationship between producers and public broadcasting was made painfully apparent during the Congress. At the "Media Heroes" Awards luncheon, all the video clips were CPB-funded, PBS-aired, or both, including *Frontline's* documentary on Rush Limbaugh, the ITVS-funded series *Signal to Noise*, Globalvision's human rights series *Rights & Wrongs*, and *America's War on Poverty*.

Meanwhile, PBS representatives were conspicuous in their absence. By my count, there were four: two from management—Fred Noriega, WNET's director of community and children's programs; and Jack Willis, Twin Cities Public TV's CEO and president—and two from public broadcasting's most-assailed program services—James Yee, executive director of ITVS; and Marc Weiss, *P.O.V.*'s director of special projects. As one participant noted wryly, "What would PBS want with a congress about media and *democracy*?"

Indeed, producers' dependence on public broadcasting for funding and distribution was particularly disheartening given that the House of Representatives had that very week reopened debate on proposals to loosen regulations on PBS underwriting. There were also proposals to permit the sale of public broadcast licenses on the assumption that Congressional budget-cutters would zero out funding for the system over the next few years.

Media & Democracy participants were not content, however, simply to blame PBS for the failure of independent producers to assume a more meaningful role in progressive political organizing. Producers also came in for their share of criticism.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force activist Scot Nakagawa noted a gulf between makers and their audience. Too much media, he said, isn't linked to action. "The progressive media community functions in the world of ideas," he said. "There's a real disinterest in grassroots organizing."

Suzanne Pharr had a similar complaint. Pharr, the founder of the Arkansas-based Women's Project, said that most of the video she sees suffers from a bicoastal and a class bias. "It's from California or New York," she said. "I wish they [the producers] had smelled and eaten some dirt like me. They don't all have to talk like me, but it'd be nice if a few did."

Other panelists suggested that producers weren't working hard enough to reach audiences. California Working Group producer Patrice O'Neill called for new efforts at audience building, including the use of strategies common to corporate media such as humor, popular culture, music, storytelling, and celebrities.

Globalvision co-founder Danny Schechter, however, questioned the use of conventional media strategies to make productions more palatable. Schechter asked whether using those techniques meant independent producers were "buying in or selling out."

One project that seemed to transcend criticism was California Working Group's *Not in Our Town*. The half-hour documentary dealt with how citizens in Billings, Montana came together to combat an outbreak of local racism [see "Talking Heads," April *Independent*]. *NIOT* was aired by over 200 PBS stations and spawned locally-based events in over 75 cities. (The *NIOT* outreach effort was co-sponsored by the IAJ.)

Given the difficulties that continue to plague independent production, it was not surprising that participants flocked to upbeat panels at which the new on-line technologies, as yet not entirely under corporate control, were being discussed. At these sessions, most panelists sketched out Panglossian scenarios. Occasionally, however, a dissenter cautioned against abandoning old technologies for the seduction of the latest techno-fix. Bob Stein, co-founder of CD-ROM producer The Voyager Company, observed that with each passing day on-line technologies are becoming more and more structured for corporate profit and one-way communication. Holding on to the Internet's common carrier model, he warned, will prove tremendously difficult.

Rather than jumping ship, *P.O.V.*'s Marc Weiss outlined his own efforts to combine new interactive technologies with old-fashioned TV. Last November, *P.O.V.* broadcast *Leona's Sister Gerri*, a documentary about a woman who died in 1964 as a result of a botched abortion. After the broadcast, the audience was asked to contribute comments via e-mail, fax, home video, or in-station recordings. Over 1,000 people responded, mostly through an 800 voice-mail number, and two weeks later, *P.O.V.* aired the one-hour audience-generated response.

Leona's Sister Gerri and *Not In Our Town* suggest how powerful effective independent production can be and hinted at why conservative forces keep independents fighting for table scraps.

Contributing Editor Barbara Bliss Osborn reports on the media from Los Angeles.

Buy Now Pay Later: The Pros and

BY ROBERT DARDON

ONE OF THE EARLIEST REPORTED INSTANCES OF A FILM BEING FINANCED with credit cards was Robert Townsend's *Hollywood Shuffle* back in 1987. The media loved the credit card angle and played it to the hilt. Filmmakers took note; this meant a movie could be made for the amount of credit obtained by somebody who flipped hamburgers.

Townsend's credit card film was one of the lucky ones. It found a distributor (Samuel Goldwyn Co.); most low-budget films do not. Even when a distribution deal is made, it usually isn't enough money to pay off the crew let alone the charged debt. While this method of financing has allowed many wannabe directors to satisfy their dream of making a movie, part of the package is the cold, sobering, morning-after shower when the bills come due.

My assignment seemed easy: Get statements from people who learned a tough lesson as a result of running up $30,000, $40,000, even $80,000, charges on their credit card accounts. In the end, it was hard finding anyone who truly regretted their filmic shopping spree. Everyone admitted that their lives were seriously inconvenienced, even traumatized because of debt collectors on their heels, but all said they'd do it again if they had to—and could get their credit rating back.

One of the stiffest critics of credit card financing is Jim McKay. His debut feature film, *Girls Town*, had an auspicious showing at the Sundance Film Festival this year and managed to garner both a domestic and foreign distributor, October Films and Pandora. The good news is that the minimum guarantees offered by the two distributors will more than pay off the $65,000 McKay charged to his cards. The bad news is that although the distributors first saw *Girls Town* last November, McKay won't be seeing any money until all contracts are signed. The payment plan with October is one-third upon signing, one-third upon delivery of the 35mm blow-up and the last third when the distributor finally releases the film in the fall. In the meantime, McKay has had to move in with friends in order to make his $1,200-per-month credit card payments.

Most of McKay's credit card expenses came up after Sundance accepted his film on the merits of a video rough-cut and rudimentary soundtrack. It was only then that *Girls Town* had to be printed onto 16mm stock. Since McKay had spent his life savings on principal photography, out came the credit cards. But the cost of a 16mm release print is minimal compared to the expenses involved in signing with a couple of distributors. For starters, they each want a 35mm blowup and a remixed soundtrack before putting up any money.

There were miscellaneous expenses charged during production as well, and not all of them were planned. Having credit cards so easily within reach during the creative frenzy of production can result in expenditures such as $800 in crew parking tickets. Even during postproduction, when things are calmer but cash is tighter, what do you do when it's lunch time and the editors all look hungrily in your direction? Blimpie doesn't take Visa, but Zen Vegetarian down the street does, and their salads can run as high as $14—*each*.

These hidden costs cause many filmmakers to start using their credit cards in the first place. "There's been so much hype and romance in the past number of years around the idea of making a movie with a credit card, and in actuality it could be a really stupid thing to do," says McKay. "The myth of the twenty-, thirty-, or even fifty-thousand dollar film just isn't true. There are certain expenses you just can't get past. You can get everyone to work deferred, you can get film stock donated, and you can borrow a camera, but someone has to process your film. Once you find a distributor, there are things like blow-ups and E&O insurance to purchase, [which] alone is eight or nine thousand dollars."

Many filmmakers say that *if* they had known what a film really cost to make before they started, *if* they had designed a realistic budget, and *if* they had adequate collateral, a bank loan would have been the way to go. Unfortunately, most people don't have all of these requirements at their disposal, and most frequently lacking is collateral. So while McKay plans on tearing up most of his cards, he also says his credit-card financing days aren't over. "I would use credit cards again," says McKay. "I'm actually thinking of doing that to help a friend produce a short in a couple of months."

Steve Chbosky is similarly critical of the credit card route. At the completion of his debut feature, the comedy *The Four Corners of Nowhere*, he owed various credit card companies something like $30,000. His advice to young filmmakers is not to follow his lead, or to charge only as a last resort. "Debtors screw up your concentration during a very critical part of production—the editing of your film," says Chbosky. For him, this is

reason enough to never charge another movie—unless the film he wants to make is so quirky he can't get it financed any other way. One of Chbosky's next films is about a talking dog, and the financing remains to be seen.

DIRECTOR SARAH JACOBSON TAKES A SOMBER VIEW OF CREDIT CARD financing. Although her first feature-length film, *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*, has been in production for well over a year, Jacobson says, "It is definitely not a good idea to get into debt. I use credit cards only as a safety net." The most she ever has on all of her cards combined is $4,000, which she then tries to pay off in a hurry to keep the interest down. "The pressures of racing against time to make the payments can really mess with your head," she cautions, "and even if you get a distributor, it doesn't necessarily mean you get any money." Jacobson would rather cajole freebies out of equipment and video houses, making sure to repay them with the killer chocolate chip cookies she makes in her San Francisco apartment. *The Hollywood Reporter* credited Jacobson with having been the only filmmaker to get a deal at this year's Independent Film Financing Conference (IFFCON): a European distributor is putting $200 toward her wrap party in exchange for her recipe.

But the other half-dozen filmmakers interviewed believe that credit is an unqualified godsend. One L.A.-based director who sensed my skeptical line of questioning finally shut me up with: "Why don't you interview someone who has decided to get out of the film business? Only an ex-filmmaker will tell you he'll never charge another movie again."

Pay Later
Cons of Credit Card Financing

Jim Bihari, a filmmaker living in Ohio, defended the use of credit card financing more patiently: "Doctors and lawyers go maybe one-hundred-thousand dollars in debt attending school in order to practice their professions, so why should I worry about spending a fourth of that to become a filmmaker? Of course, the big difference is that a doctor or lawyer is virtually guaranteed a well-paying career after school, whereas a filmmaker isn't. However, I'd venture to say that those people who take the chance to make their films and continue to persevere will eventually succeed."

In the past three years, Bihari has used approximately 20 credit cards to finance two feature-length 16mm films that he also wrote and directed—*I Didn't Think You Didn't Know I Wasn't Dead* and *My New Advisor*. The total cost of these two ventures came to $30,000. As a graduate student working on his Ph.D, Bihari makes only $15,000 a year. Most of the other filmmakers interviewed weren't employed at the time they financed their films, so how did they get such high credit clearances?

"A good way to get inundated with credit card applications is to pay off debt all at once," says Chbosky. On *Four Corners*, Chbosky ran up a few cards to their maximum limits (totaling $18,000), and then borrowed money from friends and relatives to pay them off. After he paid off the initial debt, he was able to secure a higher credit ceiling and charge the additional $30,000 needed to complete his feature.

Bihari, a compulsive planner, started acquiring a good credit rating years before he made his first movie. By charging all his living expenses on a single card and paying the bill each month in full, as well as paying off other loans on time, he was able to get reasonable clearance and terms when he finally needed them.

The simplest route to high credit limits is having a real job or being married to someone who works and will let you use his or her credit cards. An annual income of $15,000 is the minimum for getting good interest rates. Some people falsify employment information to get such clearances, but this compounds their debt problems if they get caught—and one good way to get caught is to be unable to pay your monthly bills.

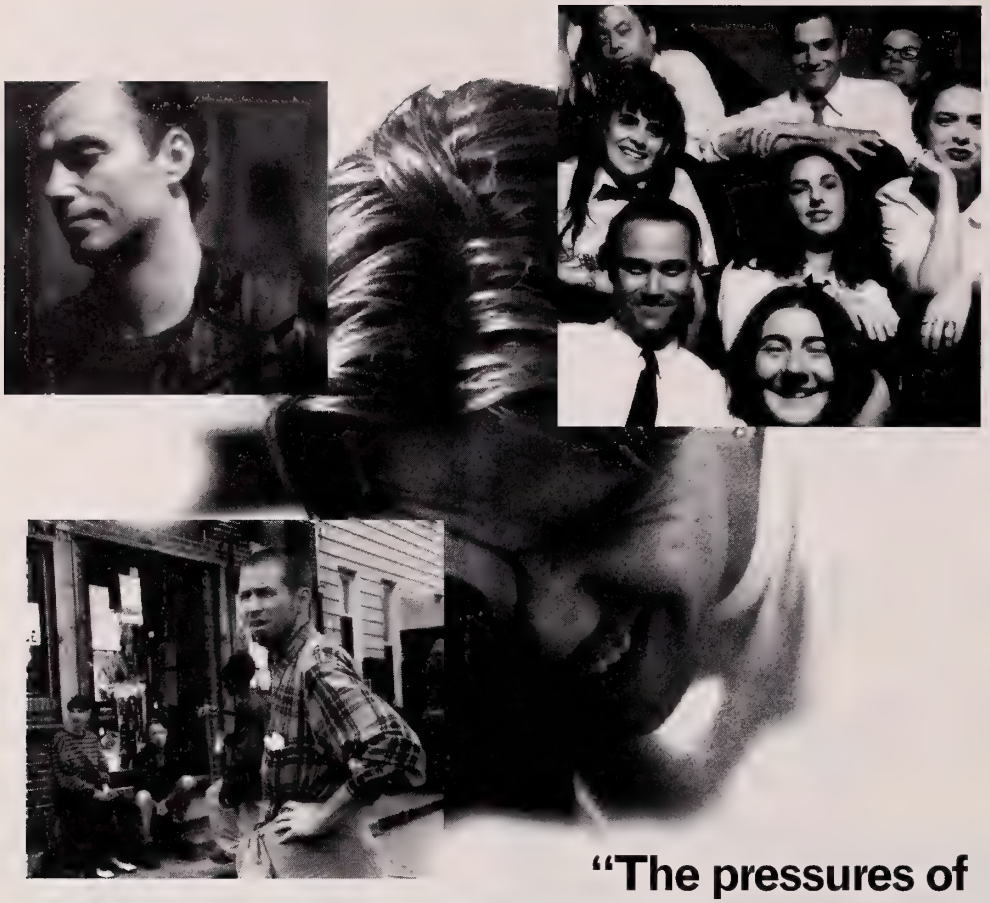
Lying on credit applications is illegal. In California, lying about your income or where you work is a misdemeanor punishable by a $1,000 fine and/or six months in jail. Use someone else's name or pretend you're a business entity, and the ante goes up to $5,000 and one year. If you do any of the above using the U.S. Postal Service (and what credit card criminal doesn't?), you're looking at Federal offenses, all of which are felonies.

No Chapter 11 can protect you from consequences like these, but some filmmakers believe that since they rent their homes and own nothing of value, they have no assets for which to sue. However, the debt's source—the movie—is worth something to a debtor, even if it's only to sell it for sound leader.

YOU'VE SEARCHED YOUR SOUL, EXHAUSTED YOUR OTHER FINANCING options, and decided to charge your next production. What's the best way to go about it?

Bihari offers some basic tips: "Don't apply for too many cards when the offers first start to come in. Wait until you need to start buying film and equipment. That way you can take advantage of the new cards' low introductory interest rates when you most need to do so.

"Applying for too many new credit cards at once can adversely affect your credit rating when all the companies start making queries about



Clockwise from left: Larry Simeone, director, *The Gifted*, needs more credit to finish his film; director Sarah Jacobson (bottom, front), reserves credit for emergencies; Writer-director Steve Chbosky raised his limit to $30,000 for *The Four Corners of Nowhere*; *Girls Town* has a distributor, but director Jim McKay still has huge monthly payments. Courtesy filmmakers; Jacobson photo by Adam Dodds; McKay photo by Loria King.

your credit history," says Bihari. "You might be penalized by one credit card company for being rejected by another. Apply only for cards that have good offers and would be likely to accept a poor sucker like you or me."

"The pressures of racing against time to make the payments can really mess with your head, and even if you get a distributor, it doesn't necessarily mean you get any money."

—SARAH JACOBSON

CREDIT CARD COMPANIES OFFER LOW INTRODUCTORY rates and other deals to entice new customers, so many credit card financiers rotate debt from one card to the next. A math major, Bihari has elevated this game to a science [see sidebar p. 31]. He periodically sorts through all the credit card junk mail he collects just to check out the offers. And he meticulously keeps track of his debt. "When I complete a balance transfer form, I update the credit card spreadsheet I maintain that lists all the relevant information about each card I have."

Low interest deals usually last from three to 12 months, but can sometimes last as long as you carry the debt. Generally, the lower the rate, the shorter the offer. It doesn't pay to transfer a balance to a card that offers a 6% rate if that rate goes up to 18% or 20% after only three months—unless you already know where you are going to move the debt. According to Bihari, it might be less of a hassle to take an offer of 9% or 12% for a year if it lasts for as long as the balance is carried.

Larry and Sharon Simeone came up with an ingenious, if flawed, method of credit-card financing for their period film, *The Gifted*. Shot in Riverside, California, the financing on this 35mm production involved asking actors and crew to use their credit cards for a pizza pie here, a roll of film there, equipment purchases, and the processing of dailies. All told, the amount put up by cast and crew was around $80,000. The Simeones charged another $80,000 on their own credit cards. An investor, impressed with the religious fervor so many people seemed to have for the film (which is now in postproduction hell), put in another $80,000. The Simeones are certain that they couldn't have made *The Gifted* without credit cards.

They're not out of the woods yet. The Simeones now have a three-hour video rough-cut with absolutely no money left to trim it down. Larry Simeone says his financing methods contributed to the long running time. "It's difficult to tell one of your investors that their scene is going to have to be shortened or cut out of the film."

Simeone says the open-ended nature of the budget was another problem. "If I could do it again, I would have gotten everybody's commitment at the very beginning of preproduction. Begging cast and crew for their credit cards once you're shooting wastes a lot of time," says Simeone. "We spent a lot of money waiting for things like film to arrive while we paid daily for equipment, meals, and motel expenses."

SINCE WRAPPING PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY six months ago, Larry and his wife have been paying $1,200 a month to their credit card companies in interest alone. Larry says he can handle avoiding the landlord for weeks on end and routinely paying reconnect charges on his phone. What really gets him down is that his cards are maxed out, and he can't charge any more time on an Avid to finish editing his film.

Robert Dardon is a recovering credit card holder and co-owner of The Independent Filmmaker's Forum: An Online Information and Networking System in Los Angeles (indie@indiefilm.com).

The Independent invites readers to send us information about your credit card film financing experiences, positive and negative, for a potential follow-up article.



Doing the Credit Card Shuffle

BY JIM BIHARI

[This article is for information only. The Independent does not recommend credit cards as the optimal financing strategy, but offers the following advice for those intrepid filmmakers who decide to pursue this course. — The editors]

IN ORDER TO USE CREDIT CARDS effectively to finance a feature-length film, you need to get at least a half dozen major credit cards. If you have trouble getting credit, start with department store or gas station cards. Also, banks now offer deals in which you deposit $1,000 and they'll give you a card with an $800 limit. This may seem like a poor trade, but it helps you establish credit. It's better to apply for a sure thing, since each credit rejection counts against you.

Once you have a card, use it all the time, never miss a payment, and be patient; it may take several years for you to get all the cards you'll need to finance a film. Here's how to put a handful of cards to their best use.

Credit card companies offer low introductory interest rates, but they rarely remind you when the rates are scheduled to go up (often to very high rates of 18% or 21%). They want you to use the low rate to incur new debt or transfer old debt into the account, and they count on your not having the money to pay it off when the rate goes up.

What you can do: Keep a careful record (i.e. a computer spreadsheet) of when the rates on your various cards are due to increase. Just before they do, pay them off in full with a balance transfer from another card with a low interest deal. If you did not happen to receive another such offer in the mail, call all your credit card companies and ask what offers they have; some offer good unadvertised deals. Some companies will offer a better rate only if you carry a large balance. Others may only offer you a better deal several months after you pay your balance in full because they want your business back. In the latter case, you may save money by paying off one account with a balance transfer from another card and later transferring that balance back to the original account when a better rate is offered. Keeping your debt in motion may save you a lot of money.

Credit card companies offer different rates for different services in the hope you will think the lowest rate is good for everything. For instance, balance transfers may be at a 6% interest rate, but purchases may be 18% and cash advances 21%.

What you can do: Suppose you need to spend $5,000 on an answer print, but your credit cards are offering special 6% rates only for balance transfers and not for purchases. Using a low interest balance transfer offer from one card, transfer a balance of $5,000 to a second card. Use that second card to make the purchase. In effect, you've made the purchase at the 6% interest rate. You can also use the low interest balance transfer offer of one card to obtain a negative balance on a second card. The second card will send a refund check, if requested. This is a cheap way of getting a cash advance. *Never* get a high interest cash advance using your card at an automatic teller machine or using high interest cash advance "checks" unless you absolutely have to.

Credit card companies intersperse good offers with bad ones to confuse you. Instead of a balance transfer *form*, they may send you a balance transfer *check* good for a 6% rate. Then in the coming weeks they'll send you additional cash advance checks that have a higher rate.

These cash advance checks may come with a deceptive, flashy insert which reads, "Pay off your high interest credit cards with these cash advance checks from your Low Interest SuperCard Account." But when you read the fine print, you might find that the balances are charged an 18% or 21% APR, not the 6% offered by the balance transfer check sent a week earlier.

What you can do: Read the fine print and, if necessary, call customer support to have the terms clarified. They don't always give you the right answers, so be careful. If you do make a mistake and use a high interest check, you can bail out of it by transferring your balance to a different low interest credit card, if you have enough cards.

If your account has both high- and low interest balances, the company might apply your payments first to the low interest balance or to the total amount, instead of applying them solely to the high interest portion. If you have a $5,000 balance at a low 6% balance transfer rate and use that same card to make a $500 purchase at a higher rate, the credit card company won't let you pay that high interest rate on the $500 purchase until the $5,000 low interest balance is paid in full.

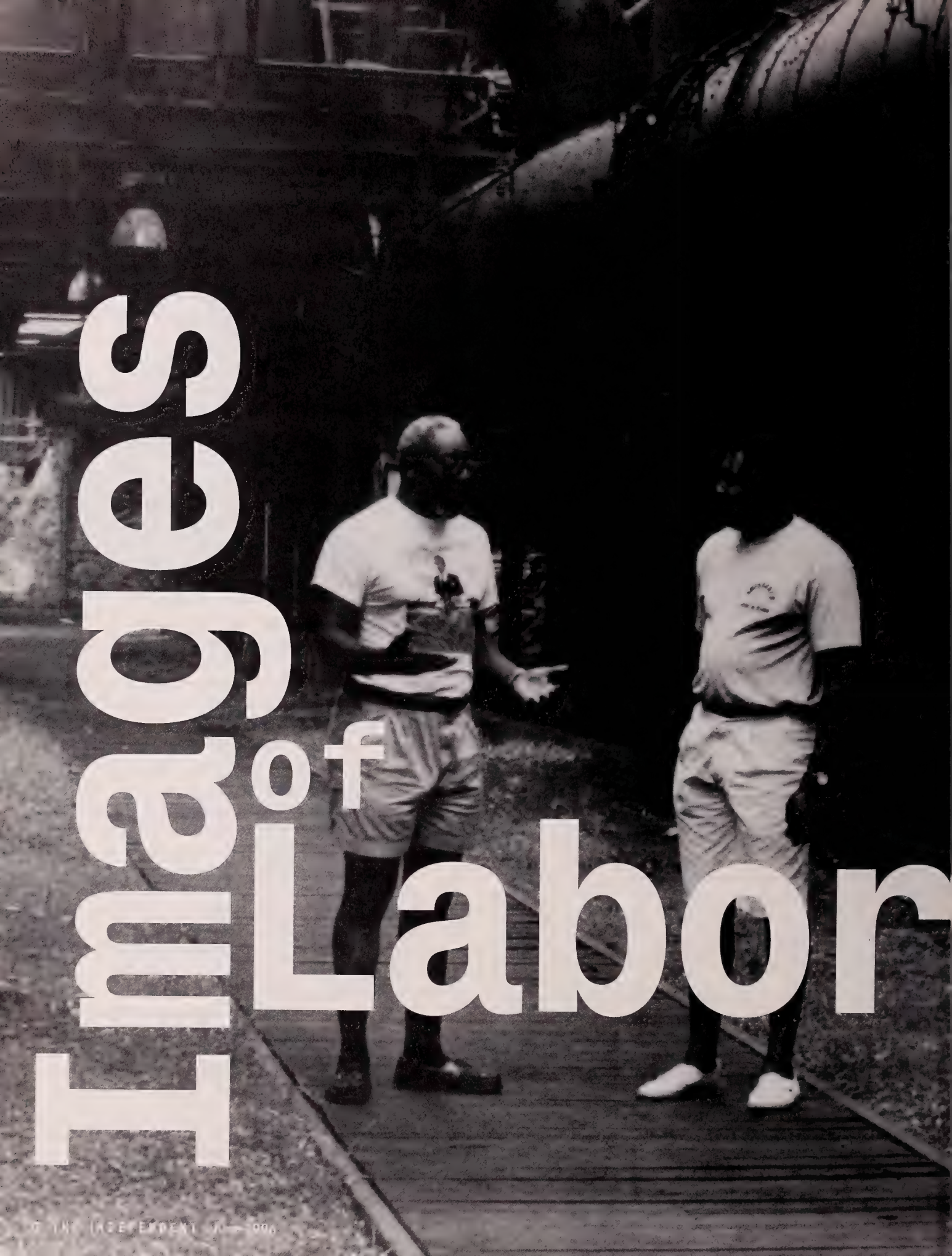
What you can do: See if you can specify in writing toward what portion of the balance you want your payment applied. It's best not to mix different types of balances on one card. If you have a card that offers a special low interest rate on balance transfers until that balance is paid off (no time limit), then transfer the maximum to that account and never use that card. Keep in mind that late payments or charging over your credit limit may cause that special low interest rate to rise considerably.

Beware misleading come-ons. "You pay no interest until the end of the monthly billing period! Other cards charge you interest the moment you make a purchase!" Interest compounded daily is more than interest compounded monthly, so should you transfer your debt to their card? Well, the difference is less than one fifth of one percent, even at 20% APR. I've had a credit card customer support representative tell me that a 12% APR compounded daily is like 15% APR compounded monthly, which simply isn't true; it's more like 12.1% APR compounded monthly.

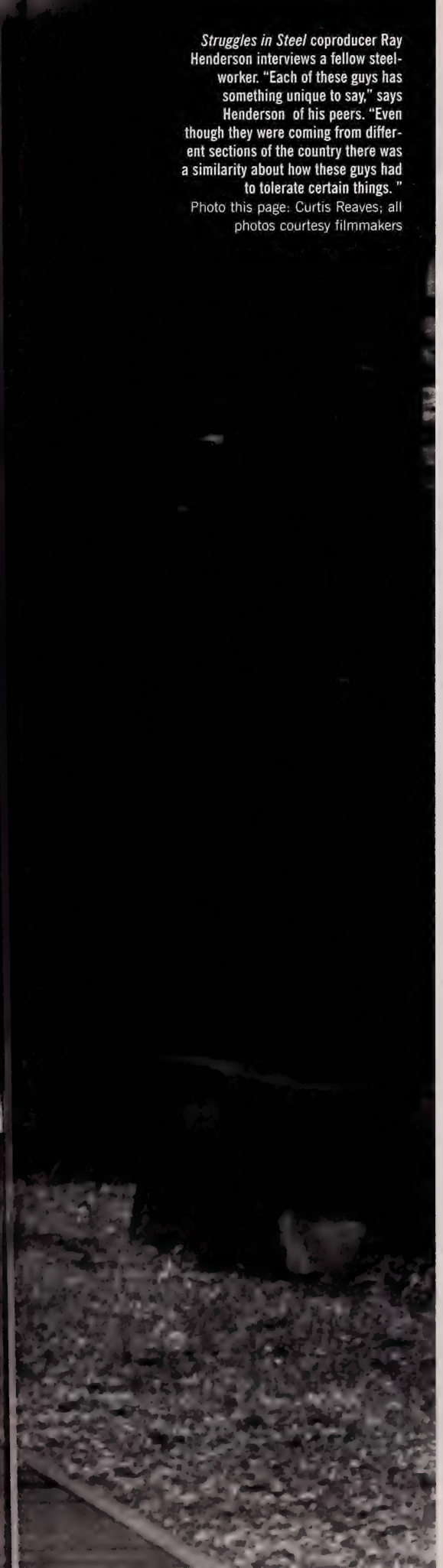
What you can do: Go with the better base interest rate, since differences in compounding monthly versus daily are negligible. And don't be afraid to ask around for a better deal.

If you dare to dance the credit card shuffle, do it wisely. Read the fine print, keep careful track of all aspects of your cards; keep your receipts and monitor your mail to ensure that your bills (with your credit card numbers) aren't lost or stolen and always make your payments on time. If you experience credit card problems, contact the National Consumers' Credit Card Hotline at 1-800-388-2227.

Jim Bihari is completing his Ph.D. in science education at Ohio State University and has a B.S. in physics from Kent State University—all the while making films and going ever deeper into Debtor's Hell. He has just completed writing, producing, and directing his second 16mm feature film.



Images of Labor



Struggles in Steel coproducer Ray Henderson interviews a fellow steelworker. "Each of these guys has something unique to say," says Henderson of his peers. "Even though they were coming from different sections of the country there was a similarity about how these guys had to tolerate certain things."
Photo this page: Curtis Reaves; all photos courtesy filmmakers

A FILMMAKERS' ROUNDTABLE

ON *AMERICAN JOB*, *DADETOWN*, AND *STRUGGLES IN STEEL*

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

THIS YEAR'S SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL INCLUDED THREE FILMS THAT ADDRESS ISSUES OF LABOR AND THE POST-INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACE: *STRUGGLES IN STEEL*, *DADETOWN*, AND *AMERICAN JOB*. *The Independent* took this occasion to gather these filmmakers together to talk about their projects, their radically different stylistic approaches, and their experiences in the labor force.

Struggles in Steel came about when Ray Henderson, a steel mill worker and civil rights activist, contacted his old high school friend, veteran documentarian Tony Buba (*Lightning Over Braddock*), and asked him to collaborate on a film about the historic role of African Americans in the steel industry. The resulting documentary is a classic combination of first-person testimonials and archival material, which traces this history from the days of the sharecroppers' children's migration to the North, to the integration of the mills in 1974, to the present situation of downsizing and unemployment. Having worked in the mills for over two decades, Henderson acts as the guide and interviewer of his peers, who eloquently and movingly recount this hidden history. (*Struggles* will be screened this month at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in New York City.)

American Job, by the Milwaukee-based Chris Smith, tracks a low-wage Everyman, Randy Scott (played by co-screenwriter Randy Russell), as he moves from one demoralizing job to another. We follow him through the interview process, training, and excruciatingly mindless routines, getting up-close-and-uncomfortable with what it's like to wash dishes in a fast-food restaurant, change beds in a roadside motel, operate industrial machinery, do inventory on the late-night shift, and drone through telemarketing speeches. Smith and Russell both worked many of these jobs, and in some cases returned to their former workplaces to shoot, using real bosses and employees as their cast. The film will open in July at New York City's The Screening Room.

Russ Hexter, a recent New York University film school graduate, was raised in Armonk, New York—a small paper-mill town near the Hudson River that was transformed when it became the site of IBM headquarters. His film *Dadetown* traces a comparable upheaval in the village of Dadetown. Gorman Metal, once a manufacturer of airplane fuselages, now bends metal into paper clips and staples. When the film begins, a high-tech corporation, American Peripheral Imaging (API), has just moved in, bringing an influx of yuppies, good intentions, and a boom in construction, but also creating fissures within the community as change follows and Gorman faces layoffs and closure. Using a classic verité style, *Dadetown* is actually a fake documentary about a fictional town. It uses a mix of actors and nonactors, script and improvisation, staged interviews and unrehearsed verité-type shooting, but keeps its secret until the closing credits. *Dadetown* has been booked into Manhattan's Film Forum for a two-week run starting September 18.

As *The Independent* was going to press, we learned that Russ Hexter died suddenly on April 29 from complications of Marfan's Syndrome, a genetic disorder. More information will follow in the July issue.

The Independent: How did each of you arrive at your stylistic choice? Did the content shape the form? Let's start with you Tony, since you have taken so many different approaches over the course of your career. Did you and Ray deliberate about other approaches?

Tony Buba: On this film, I wanted to make sure the content ends up dictating the form. I wanted to be more invisible, instead of like in *Lightning Over Braddock*, [in which] it's me doing the whole bit. I didn't want to bring any attention to myself, because it was the subject matter I wanted to bring attention to. So it was decided we'd use a straightforward, somewhat traditional approach, in the use of archival materials and the interviews.

IND [to Ray Henderson]: Given your participation in this history, you two could have chosen to make this film much more about you, Ray.

WE SHOWED A 20-MINUTE CUT TO A LIBRARY GROUP, AND THIS WHITE GENTLEMAN ASKED IF WE USED ACTORS TO PLAY THE BLACK MEN. HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THESE GUYS COULD ARTICULATE AND MAKE THE POINTS THEY DID."

— TONY BUBA

Buba: Actually, when we were starting on it, I was thinking of it being a journey film with Ray and his voice, but it was difficult; Ray did not want to do that. I had to really convince him to pull him in for the voiceover. Ray did not want the attention being put on him. He wanted it to be a mass group.

IND: It is like a chorus of voices.

Henderson: And each of these guys has something unique to say. Even though they were coming from different sections of the country—being born in Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Virginia—there was a similarity straight down the line about how these guys had to tolerate certain things. But with each one, there's an individual story that could be expanded on and made into a 10 to 15 minute topic very easily.

I wanted them to be the primary focus, not me. Matter of fact, I did resist doing certain things, because to me, my ego isn't that big. I've lived long enough to know that you don't need a big ego to get things done. You just need persistence.

IND: How do you feel about it now, seeing yourself on screen?



Henderson (back row, right) served as guide and interviewer in *Struggles in Steel*.

Henderson: That doesn't bother me. I know the primary focus is where we wanted it to go, even though it was necessary for me to give some of my background, my personal opinions. I'm not there that much. And I'm really talking about what they said, not what I said. That to me was the most important thing—to get the truth out.

IND: Chris, your documentary is an interesting hybrid. Basically, you're taking real situations, inserting an actor into it, and letting that play out. You end up very effectively conveying the mind-numbing tedium of those kinds of jobs—a plastics factory worker, fast-food dishwasher, graveyard-shift inventory man, and so on.

However, since you're dealing with an actor and, in parts, a script, did you consider creating more of a dramatic arc? This character doesn't change. It's really a sequence of situations.

Chris Smith: We were mainly trying to create a straightforward portrait of what it is like to work low-end jobs in America. At least 90 percent of our friends are still working these kinds of jobs, for which there is seemingly no way out that I can see. Whether you felt the character evolved or not, I thought there was a progression, a downward spiral of Randy's character through the film.

Russ Hexter: Downward how? In what way was the last job [telemarketer] worse than the first [plastics factory machine operator]?

Smith: The last job was worse in that you couldn't even think your own thoughts anymore. You were pretty much at the lowest common denominator, the lowest form of employment. You're a human that they're buying for this amount of time to just speak their words. I'd worked the first and second job, and the telemarketing job, and to me, the telemarketing was by far the worst thing I had ever done in my life.

Hexter: It's dehumanizing.

Smith: Yeah, completely. They all were, in some respects.

IND: But again, you could have created a film that takes those jobs and that decline and turns it into an emotional drama, rather than a deadpan, at points real-time enactment—but you chose not to, and I'd like you to talk about why.

Smith: For me, it *is* an emotional film. I feel for Randy every time I see it. I'm sure that there's a handful of people in every audience, or maybe a majority, who won't connect with Randy, but coming from that environment and working those jobs, I feel like I've lived Randy's character's life. The film completely moves me almost every time I see it.

IND [to Randy Russell]: What's your relationship to that character? Were you playing yourself?

Russell: With me and jobs, it's kinda like myself, though it's not my personal life. It was more like representing someone's career of working. Like the time you start working—I tried to put in some subtle things at the beginning, where he was a little more playful. At first, he has an attention span, he's looking around, more alive. And then going through the five jobs, leading to more desperation at the end and buying the lottery ticket, it's the act of giving up.

Buba: I spent three years delivering bathtubs for a plumbing supply company, then

I spent another three years working on an assembly line. When I saw your character sitting outside [during a lunch break] talking about inventing stuff, I remembered the only way you can maintain your sanity is to daydream the whole day away. I was playing football for Notre Dame, day in and day out. Then I quit when I started repeating my daydreams. I decided it was time to go to college at age 26 or 25. But Ray has spent 20 years in the mill.

IND: There are a lot of resonances between *American Job* and *Struggles in Steel*. What's interesting about the choice of jobs in *American Job* is that you not only have the factory jobs, but you also have the new jobs that are at the low-end of the information-service economy—telemarketing, doing dishes in McDonald's—the kind of jobs that laid off factory workers might get, if they're lucky.

Henderson: It puts us in competition not only with teenagers, but with senior citizens. Really when I think about it, *Struggles in Steel* should have been running side by side with *American Job* [at Sundance], just so people can see and understand what this plight is about and what happens to people whether they reach their peak and fall, or whether they never reach a peak.

Hexter: It's like you're always falling. It's almost like an Escher painting: Even when you think you're stepping up and getting out of something, you're just on another lower rung.

IND: Russ, you said last night during a Q&A that, " If I'm going to take this documentary style, I'm going to take it all the way." You did that in one sense, but it is still just a *style*. Why not go all the way and do the real thing? You rightly point out that this kind of job displacement is going on all around the country. Why not find a small town where this is going on and track it? Was it a question of time—that you didn't want to spend twelve years on a subject, like a Barbara Kopple?

Hexter: Well yes, I suppose twelve years making the film, that could be one factor. The other is that it was just a much easier way of telling the story and making our point—literally to carefully construct what was going on in the town. Not just on the economic level but on a personal level, with the villagers versus the API people.

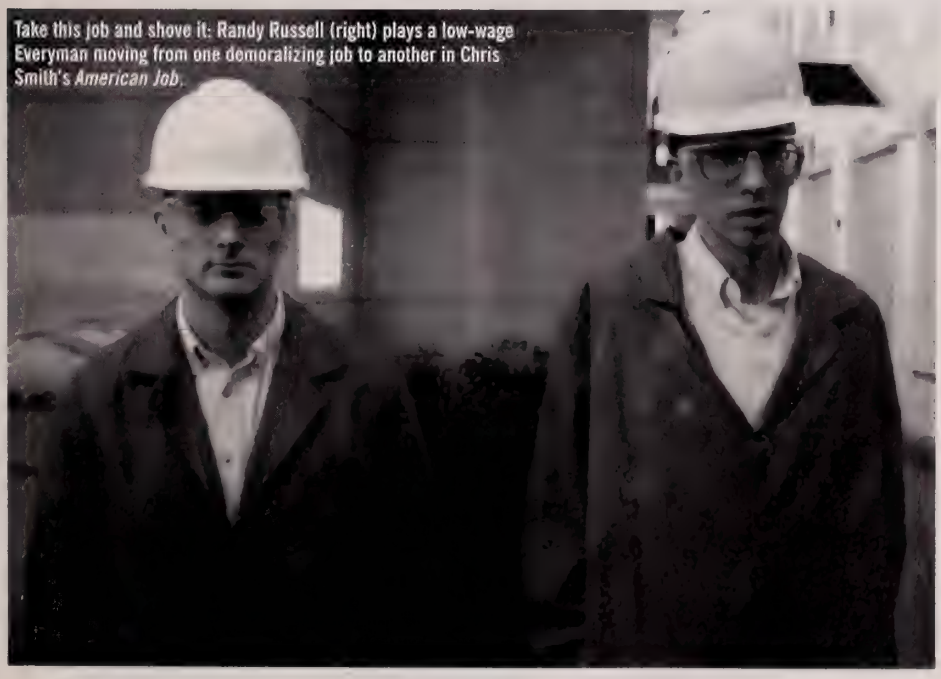
We created a very specific scenario for Dade. Our film wasn't a capturing of reality like *Struggles in Steel*, and it wasn't a recreating of experience like *American Job*. We literally created the situation from the ground up.

IND: Do you think there's a danger that not revealing this isn't a documentary until the end credits might blow up in your face? That the audience might come away thinking " I was deceived!" as opposed to thinking about the issues the film raises?

Hexter: Well, it's certainly a risk. The idea wasn't to deceive people for deception's sake, but simply because a documentary was the best way to tell this story. Because we were trying to tell the story of an entire town, the documentary format just gave us incredible freedom. We didn't have to worry about a main protagonist. We didn't have to worry about a singular storyline. We could tap into as many characters and have as many little storylines as we wanted. And we could have a whole tapestry of characters that made up the town tell the story, and introduce characters later on, as events unfolded. It allowed us to make the point much more intimately than we would have showing a town's struggle through one person.

"RIGHT BEFORE WE WOULD SHOOT I WOULD ALWAYS THROW THE SCRIPT OUT THE WINDOW AND [SAY]: 'DO NOT LOOK AT THE CAMERA. RELAX. DON'T SAY ANYTHING IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING.' WE ENDED UP GETTING VERY NATURAL, SIMPLE PERFORMANCES."

—CHRIS SMITH



Take this job and shove it: Randy Russell (right) plays a low-wage Everyman moving from one demoralizing job to another in Chris Smith's *American Job*.

IND: Some viewers thought you should drop more clues to the audience, so that a clever audience might pick up the ruse before the final credits.

Hexter: I feel like if you're going to do it like a documentary, you might as well go all the way. Some people ask, " Are you parodying documentaries?" Not at all. We're utilizing the powerful form of the documentary to tell the story, because it creates a kind of intimacy that I don't think you can have in a straight narrative film. You connect with the character more when you think you're watching that person, and you know there's no acting whatsoever.

I referred to a lot of documentaries—*Harlan County, USA*, Errol Morris' *Vernon, Florida* and *Gates of Heaven*.

Brother's Keeper—to see how they would frame interviews, when the camera would zoom in and refocus, how it moved. We studied the minutiae of that, but in the end it came down to us capturing what we had in front of us. And that was really the story of how an economy becomes replaced by another economy. "Gorman Metal" was making airplane fuselages. During World War Two, there was constant propaganda about how much you're helping the country just by buying a War Bond; but if you're making airplanes, my gosh, you're really having a hand in the war effort.

Then in the seventies, after all the plane companies like Boeing, McDonald-Douglas, and Lockheed monopolized the airplane business, Gorman had to switch to stationary products, like paper clips and staples. All of a sudden it was a very different environment; it just became labor, without the dream or the goal.

There's a difference between working for work's sake, and working for a larger goal. When you're constantly being told during wartime that you're pushing the country toward victory, you're going to work longer shifts. And it's not a problem, because you're working for something that's not selfish.

Buba: When I worked in a factory, I didn't care what I was making. I just hated the job. It was work; it was decent money, though. Back then, you're talking 1965, I'm making three to four dollars an hour. What you'd learn to do on the job was first how to break your machines, so you'd have down time. That was the first thing—jamming the machine up, so you can go and just hide in the bathroom for a couple of hours. It didn't take too long to figure out they weren't paying me for an eight-hour day; they're paying me for a four-hour day, and the other four hours are going for their profit. I tried to kick off four hours a day.


patrol duty. "At percent of our s are still working kinds of jobs," says director Chris Smith.

Hexter: I was wondering though, if you're working in a place in which there is no other work than The Factory, and there are not a lot of other options...

Buba: At the time when I was there, that was going to be my final job. My uncle took two years to get me into this baseboard heating plant, because it was the highest paying plant in Pittsburgh, and at that time, it was a better job than working at the mill, because it's safer, you're indoors. The only thing is, I put a rivet through my finger once, but that was about it. Then they came out with the two buttons, so you didn't do that anymore.

What really used to piss me off were the guys in college that would come to work in the factory, and they would rush around and do their work and complain about us, cause we're pacing ourselves to work until we're 65. The guys who come in and work the summer are going back to school in the fall. We didn't like them [laughs].

Hexter: Wasn't there once a time when that kind of work did have more of a resonance of pride to it?

Buba: I think that's all romantic. Ask Ray.

Hexter: Maybe it's all romantic, but it seems to me that if you're working a job...I mean, for us it's very specific; we created a situation where it was a little more glorious, because it was for a war effort, and this town literally saw the results: their sidewalks were paved and their churches and schools were improved...

Henderson: Afro-Americans participated in the War effort, but they were still at the bottom of the heap. They didn't have the opportunity to pave the streets and get new homes, etc., because the system still didn't work for them. The owners of the steel mill surely wasn't giving them mortgages. Even the credit union; you could belong to the credit union, but I couldn't get a loan. I could save my money there and take my money out, but I couldn't take the money that the other workers put there for building new homes, buying automobiles, or putting their kids through college. That wasn't made available to me.

IND: Do you all think that an audience needs some kind of demarcation between fabrication and reality when you're working with hybrid films?

Smith: The thing that threw me off the most was after our first screening, a guy in the front row raised his hand and asked if we'd filmed the whole thing with hidden cameras. I proceeded to explain how, although there were parts where we did allow people to tell their story, it did follow a carefully crafted outline. Even after that he raised his hand and asked, " Did the guy with the gun always carry a gun?" It really hit me that when something's up on the screen and looks real, people will take it as real.

Hexter: And they want it to be real.

Buba: With our film, it's a straightforward documentary, right? We were showing different versions; we had a 20-minute cut and showed it to a library group. And this white gentleman asked if we used actors to play the black men, because he could not believe these guys could articulate and make the points they did. *He* felt we were.

Henderson: It goes to show you how white audiences view Afro- American films and how they view white films when it comes down to dealing with everyday work and everyday life.

Buba: It can't be anymore straightforward than what we're doing. If we tried any type of manipulation of the form, we wouldn't have had any credibility at all, 'cause they just don't want to hear about Black people and the struggles they've had. We had to reconstruct the whole beginning. No matter where we showed the film, all the white members of the audience said, "Well, my father was Irish, my grandfather was Irish; he had to do this, he had to do that." So we had to put in everything with the lynchings and all that, just to avoid those questions, to show that there *was* a difference. We had to make it even more straightforward.

IND: So you were very sensitive to your audience.

Buba: All the way through. We'd been showing stuff for close to a year in different forms, because we'd think we had something that was working, then we'd get those questions [and realize] we had to diffuse all those questions of it being a similar experience [for different ethnicities].

There's some repetitiveness in there, because people think, " Oh, that was just one guy." We even pulled out a story where the guy was talking about how they had to learn the jobs at home, because there's a member of the audience saying, " Jeez, those guys don't want to do that today." So we had to even pull back on some of the struggle, because then they thought Black men should be struggling all the time.

Yeah, so we really did a lot of screenings with different groups to figure that out.

Henderson: That's why we had to go back to find women who worked in World War Two, because of the women's groups [saying], " Where are the women?"

IND: Rosie the Riveter.

Hexter: Well, I've had people outright call me a liar. In the Vancouver screening, I went up for a little Q and A, and this woman was marching up the aisle, turned on her heels, and shouted out to the whole theater, " Well, I think you'll do really well in Hollywood, because you're a cheat, a liar, and an idiot." And she stormed out.

The whole thing has the effect of dropping a lunch tray in the cafeteria. But it was great, because that galvanized the whole audience to talk about whether it worked or not. Luckily, most everyone jumped on my side and said that that was refreshing, and so on. But there are purists out there, they don't like being manipulated. During our Tuesday screening here, someone said it was the most manipulative film they've ever seen.

Buba: I hate documentaries that put music under their interviews.

Hexter: There's so many ways to be manipulative. I think the presence of a camera, in general, affects things.

Buba: In *Struggles*, we made sure we had a mixed crew. We always made sure the sound person was African American; the cameraperson sort of gets hidden behind the camera. I would just sort of drift off the set.

Henderson: I can honestly say this. The ones we knew weren't telling the truth about their background are not in there. And there were several of those.

IND: Why would they lie?

Henderson: We had guys who were afraid of losing their pension checks. Even in this day and age—terrified that they would take away their pension, and they wouldn't talk.

IND: Chris and Russ, can both of you talk about how the players in your films integrated their real-life stories into the dialogue?

Hexter: Casting was 90 percent of the film, really.

IND: You were casting people in their own jobs, right?

Hexter: Well, I was casting personalities that fit the personalities I'd written. I didn't want anyone to act, because we knew we had to do a lot of improvisation and they had to be very natural. Our rehearsals were mostly me giving them information about our town: what the history of Dadetown was, what the workers go through, what an average day is of Gorman employee, of an API employee, who the leaders of the companies are, what API did. I threw tons of information at them, so that when they improvised and I asked extra questions while the camera was rolling, at least they had the ammunition to make up some stories.

"WE'RE UTILIZING THE POWERFUL FORM OF THE DOCUMENTARY TO TELL THE STORY BECAUSE IT CREATES A KIND OF INTIMACY THAT I DON'T THINK YOU CAN HAVE IN A STRAIGHT NARRATIVE FILM."

— RUSS HEXTER

The amazing thing is that a lot of the nonactors had this incredible ability to just start rambling about their own personal stories, and integrate Gorman Metal, API, and all these other factors of our script into their stories. And they did it seamlessly.

IND: For instance?

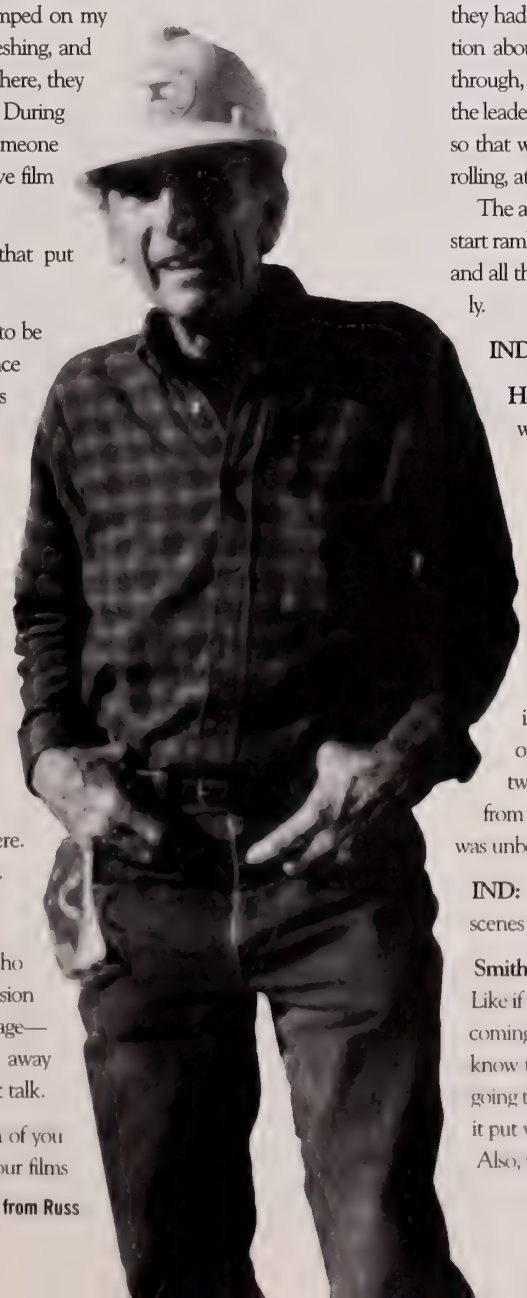
Hexter: Terry Nardone is a Vietnam Vet who lived in this small little town where we filmed. And he was perfect for this one character who had just been laid off from his job. He's got this great emotionless quality about him, like all the emotion's been sucked out of him. He had this ability to just start talking about his own former job at a plant: about OSHA, about routine checks on the equipment, how to save money by turning off electricity, and he'd be rambling and rambling, but he wouldn't be saying IBM or Smith Corona, he'd be saying API and Gorman.

There was one scene we filmed at a bar. He was so nervous when he saw all the camera equipment, that he was just, he's drinking beers. I thought it was going to be a disaster. I started asking questions, turned the camera on, and he just threw the script out the window. He was terrific. We shot twenty minutes of him talking about API and Gorman, just stuff coming from the top of his head, obviously things that came from his personal life. He was unbelievable. And he was drunk. He was slurring his words, too.

IND: Chris, what about your job interviewers, trainers, and so on. Were these scenes their usual routines?

Smith: Most of the people in the film got information on a need-to-know basis. Like if you were interviewing Randy, all you would need to know was that he was coming in for an interview to work in your factory. But most of the people didn't know the bigger picture—what we were trying to say, or that their section was going to be fitting into a bigger picture. I felt it relieved anxiety on the actors, and it put very little pressure on them,

Also, we could only do one or two takes, so right before we would shoot I would



The "Gorman Metal floor manager" from Russ Hexter's *Dadetown*.

always throw the script out the window and the direction was, " You can't mess up. Do not look at the camera. Relax. Don't say anything if you don't want to say anything." We ended up getting very natural, simple performances from those people.

IND: How about the first job interview, where he's asking Randy to guess his age and weight.



Dadetown's "Tom Dooley," one of the town's many unemployed, keeps himself busy by painting the town—in this case, white.

Smith: That particular interview was completely scripted out. We faxed it to him a few days before we showed up. We just walked in and said, " You ready to go?" Randy has an amazing ability to go with any situation and adapt, so I was never worried on his end. In that particular situation, this guy felt comfortable so we just turned the camera on and went with it. Luckily for us, we had never did any rehearsals, any screen tests or anything, so it was all me thinking " who's gonna fit into these situations" or " who represents what?"

IND: All of you: Who is your audience and how much were you thinking about them during the writing and production process?

Smith: I never really thought about audience until the first screening.

IND: Here at Sundance?

Smith: No, I showed it to an audience in Milwaukee. The audience wasn't made up of film enthusiasts, but more of people who had worked these jobs, so the response was just overwhelming. Bringing the film into this sort of environment has just been sort of a shock to me.

IND: What was shocking?

Smith: The energy didn't seem the same. The film just seemed to go over like a Hollywood film; people were right with it. But you wonder how many of the people in [the Sundance] audience can relate to the film or to Randy. The people who will relate to this film are the people who have been through his experience, and it seems like very few of those people attend the Sundance Film Festival.

IND: Now that you've got to think about distribution, are you hoping to hit a mass audience with the biggest theatrical release you can get, or are you going to target a more specific audience?

Smith: I would like as many people as possible anywhere in the world to see this film. We got a really enthusiastic response from this guy who writes for *El Mundo*, who thinks this film would play amazingly well [in Spain] because there are so many people who still have this idea of the American dream. He said a lot of them have come over here, then returned within six months, because they've found exactly what we've portrayed in our film.

Buba: There's an inherent problem that all three of our films face, and that's the most likely distribution scenario for all of our films is going to be in arthouse theaters. And arthouse crowds are not the most ideal audiences for our films.

IND: There's also the nontheatrical market.

Buba: Yes, there's a nontheatrical market. Something like *Struggles in Steel* could go all over the place. And *American Job* as well.

Smith: I know a professor at Milwaukee who actually did show it in a class on Social Welfare. Their midterm exam was on *American Job*. We included that page on our press kit: It's this amazing list of questions and ideas. I went in and talked to this class. The way they looked at the film, it almost seemed like the ideal setting for the film.

Buba: The whole thing of audience, there's certain decisions you make when you're editing that you know will play to a larger audience. But then it's no longer your film. In *No Pets*, I knew that if I had this character change at the end, take control of his life, have at least one bar fight, and have it be more typical, then there's more of an audience. But then, why don't you have someone else make the film? You can only make what you feel like making.

Hexter: The scary thing for us was, I thought we *were* making a commercial film [everyone laughs].

IND: Are any of you planning to tour with your film and do in-person appearances?

Buba: That's really the thing. That would be the goal for me—to see Ray going out with the film, hitting those college campuses.

Henderson: All you hear about now is, "America's a level playing field now, let's get rid of Affirmative Action." I mean, anybody believes that. In terms of audience, we know that the Afro-American community, the majority of it, will like what we've done. It's the Caucasian community we're really trying to get to understand what has been done and try to get some feedback on how can we overcome the problems.

Smith: I've actually been surprised at just how many people have come up and stopped either me or Randy and said something to the effect that " Yours was my favorite film I've seen at the festival this year." Ultimately I hope it gets seen by wider audiences, but I mean that's almost enough: To know that the handful of people out there were touched by your film.

Buba: There's a line from a New York filmmaker named Manny Kirchheimer that I use all the time now. He says one thing about the independent filmmaker: maybe only five thousand people will ever see your film, but eventually you get to meet all five thousand.

Smith: We're getting there.

Patricia Thomson is editor of The Independent.



The lesbian daughter of a radical religious right figure attempts recociliation with her father in *Family Values*.
Courtesy filmmaker

In & Out of production

BY ADAM KNEE

The plight of baby girls in China, where many families prefer to have a boy, is given exposure in a number of recent independent documentaries. In January, Cinemax aired **The Dying Rooms: China's Darkest Secret** (video, 42 min.), an undercover documentary revealing staggering abuses of infant girls in mainland Chinese orphanages. British filmmakers Brian Woods and Kate Blewett entered China as tourists, each concealing different parts of a camera. Once in the country, they reassembled the camera and visited various state orphanages, which they managed to gain thorough access to simply looking confident in what they were doing. The film's singularly disturbing images offer evidence of profound neglect of orphaned girls, though such abuse continues to be denied by the government. *The Dying Rooms*, http://www.delphi.co.uk/dying/ or c/o Tim Chandler, Cinemax, 1100 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036.

The challenges of adopting an abandoned Chinese baby girl are documented in Hugh Taylor's **A Mother's Journey** (video, 57 min.). Taylor's piece, originally shot on a Sony Hi8 pro camera, captures the difficulties encountered by a single woman in her mid-forties when she adopts her second Chinese baby and discovers it may have serious health problems. The video was recently picked up for distribution by Cinema Guild. *A Mother's Journey*, Anabel Films, Inc., 11908 Darlington Ave. #6, Los Angeles, CA 90049; (818) 501-7847, fax 501-3745, fmemories@aol.com.

Imperiled children—in an entirely different context—are also the subject of Mira Reym Binford's 1994 documentary **Diamonds in the Snow** (video, 59 min.) The film tells the story of three Jewish children from the Polish city of Bendzin who survived the Nazi holocaust, one being the filmmker herself. Through interviews and archival materials, this award-winning film, which has been broadcast on television in North America and Europe and has now been picked up for distribution by Cinema Guild, recounts specific events of the Holocaust and reflects upon the complexities of memory and of human nature. Producer/writer/director Binford is a professor of film & media studies at Quinnipiac College. *Diamonds in the Snow*, Mira Reym Binford, 548 Orange St. #4064, New Haven, CT 06511; tel/fax (203) 865-8801.

Filmmaker Nicole Betancourt likewise uses childhood memories as an introspective starting point in her film **Before You Go: A Daughter's Diary** (video, 55min.). Betancourt's documentary chronicles the director's efforts to find out more about her past and her family—her father in particular—in the year before his death from AIDS. The piece was broadcast in March on HBO as the first of a series of *Family Video Diairies*. *Before You Go: A Daughter's Diary*, Nicole Betancourt, 232 Elizabeth St. #5A, New York, NY 10012; (212) 274-8840.

Producer/director Pam Walton also employs a video-diary format to tell the story of her family and of her attempts at reconciliation with her father, a leading behind-the-scenes figure in the radical religious right. Walton and her father have been estranged for over 15 years because of what he sees as his daughter's "sinful lesbian lifestyle." The videomaker describes the genesis of **Family Values** (Hi8 & Beta SP, 56 min.) thusly: "I set out to find the true meaning of 'family' and to expose the enormous hypocrisy that exists among some of the right wing's 'family values' activists.... Finally, *Family Values* asks us to remember that 'family' is a complex and deeply personal experience." The piece is being distributed by Filmakers Library in New York. *Family Values*, Pam Walton Productions, Box 391025, Mountain View, CA 94039; (415) 960-3414, fax 962-8539, pwalton@leland.stanford.edu.

It took Native American producer/director Sandra Sunrising Osawa better than 10 years to raise adequate funding to make her most recent documentary, **Pepper's Pow Wow** (video, 58 min.), which chronicles the life and career of Jim Pepper, a world renowned Native American jazz

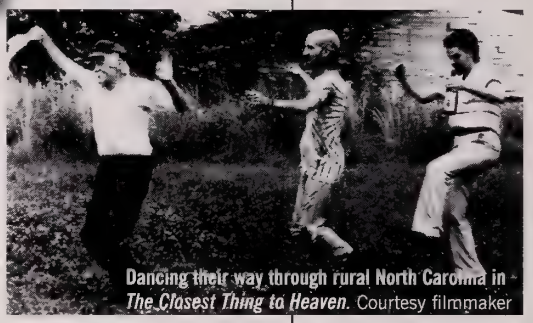


Andrew Tasahos and Mark Finley cavort in costume in the Faustian *Crocodile Tears*. Courtesy filmmaker

composer and musician. "America is so in love with Indians in the past tense," Osawa notes, "that it is extremely difficult to produce programs featuring contemporary Native Americans." While underappreciated in the United States, Pepper was a star on the European club circuit and was an important innovator both in the jazz-rock fusion movement of the mid-1960s and in fusing Native American music with jazz. *Pepper's Pow Wow*, which was produced with funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and which won the "Best Documentary Feature: Video" award at the American Indian Film Festival, includes rare concert footage and recordings by Pepper and other jazz greats. Osawa is currently completing the documentary *Usual & Accustomed Places*, which looks at fishing rights cases in the Northwest over the past century. *Pepper's Pow Wow*, Upstream Productions, Inc., 420 1st Ave. West, Seattle, WA 98119; (206) 281-9177, fax 284-6963.

The producers of **Crocodile Tears** (Super 16mm, 82 min.), a low-budget Seattle feature currently in postproduction, found that they had to use at least as much creativity in funding their project as in shooting it. Seed money for the film came in part from a lifetime achievement award given to Ted Sod, the film's executive producer, scriptwriter, and star, but further grants were fairly slow in coming. The filmmakers ultimately had much more success with a series of local fundraisers, with further support from that old standby, the credit card. The cast and crew worked for deferred salaries or no salaries at all, and the film was shot on Super 16mm stock over a period of 25 days. Directed by Ann Coppel and written by Sod in response to his own HIV+ status, *Crocodile Tears* is a modern-day retelling of the Faust story, in which an HIV+ gay man makes a pact with the devil by way of cable access television. *Crocodile Tears*, Crocodile Tears Productions, 318 10th Ave. East #A-7, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 324-6419.

The Closest Thing to Heaven (Super 16mm, 98 min.), a new independent feature from North Carolina director Dorne Pentes, is described as "a series of five interwoven short stories about love, death, and barbeque." Shot on Super 16mm in the mill villages north and west of Charlotte, the film humorously explores the lives of factory workers, waitresses, cooks, preachers, single mothers, and other denizens of today's urban South, and its soundtrack features a number of Southern musical idioms. Pentes and producer Wendy Fishman have chosen to self-distribute the film, which was financed by private investors in conjunction with the North Carolina Film Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting local indie production. *The Closest Thing to Heaven*, Kitty Pix, 3063 N. Alexander St., Charlotte, NC 28205; (704) 343-2624, fax 343-0310.



Dancing their way through rural North Carolina in *The Closest Thing to Heaven*. Courtesy filmmaker

In more northerly climes, director/writer/editor Chris Hart's no-budget New York drama **Timeless** (35mm, 90 min.) demonstrates once more the timelessness of that old chestnut, "Necessity is the mother of invention." Strapped for cash, Hart struck upon the idea of making use of the numerous samples of various film stocks he was able to acquire from obliging Kodak representatives. He puts Super 8, 16mm, and 35mm together and stirs, and, thanks in part to the effective use of a borrowed, converted contact printer, ends up not with a hodge-podge, but with a distinctively and consistently stylized film. *Timeless*, which tells the story of a teenaged petty criminal attempting a heroic gesture, has screened at Sundance and at the Tribeca Film Center's First Look series. *Timeless*, TGOM Productions, Inc., Box 33, Valhalla, NY 10595; (914) 762-6447.

Nora Ligorano and Marshall Reese also combine disparate visual materials for artistic ends in their multimedia installation **The Corona Palimpsest**, which showed at the Cristine Rose Gallery in Soho in November 1995. The installation, which concerns cultural changes being engendered by new electronic forms of information transmission, features two handbound volumes, each of which has embedded in it an LCD video monitor that broadcasts a form of electronic poetry, composed through the digital manipulation of texts by various authors. As the video screen presents textual material not traditionally associated with moving image technologies, so do the book pages offer materials from a gamut of unwonted sources, ranging from cave paintings to media coverage of the Gulf War. Ligorano/ Reese's work is thus "about the continuity of culture and language, when contemporary society seems to strive for their disruption." Granary Books (568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012) is publishing a limited edition of *The Corona Palimpsest* this spring. *The Corona Palimpsest*, Nora Ligorano/Marshall Reese, (718) 782-9255.

Also in and out of production:

• Dante J. James' **A. Philip Randolph: For Jobs and Freedom** chronicles the life of the pioneering African-American labor leader who organized the celebrated 1963 March on Washington. Broadcast nationally on PBS, the documentary is distributed by California Newsreel (415/621-6196).

• Mike Tollin, an Academy and Emmy Award nominee this year for *Hank Aaron: Chasing the Dream*, is now directing his first feature, **Fast Girls**. The film, being produced by DEF Pictures, relates the true story of a coach who transformed eight teenaged girls from an Oakland housing project into a record-breaking national championship track team. Contact: Mark Pogachefsky or Laura Kim (213) 933-3399.

• **Narrow** is the low-budget 16mm debut feature film of 22-year old Bulgarian native Tchavdar Gueorguiev. Shot on location in Chicago and Missouri, the film is about a "collection of ordinary people [who] find themselves caught up in the passion and lust of living in each other's daydreams." Contact: (312) 486-2315.

• Veteran horror directors Tod Browning and Terence Fisher, as well as such cult figures as John Carpenter and Dario Argento, are among those profiled in the new television series **The Fearmakers** (Aries Productions, 817/640-9955). The show is hosted by John McCarty, author of the now-classic volume *Splatter Movies*.

• **Looking for America** (Mancuso Productions, 718/497-6750) documents the Italian immigrant experience in the U.S. from a variety of perspectives. The hour-long film has been shown on Italian television, as well as at a number of European fests.

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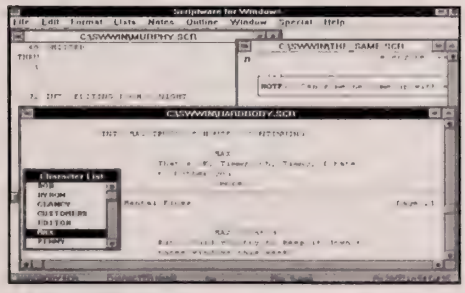
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BY KATHRYN BOWSER

SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., AUG. 1 FOR OCTOBER ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED. LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT.

DOMESTIC

AFI LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, late Oct./early Nov., CA. Large invitational, noncompetitive feature film fest (shorts accepted on invitational basis) drawing on resources & contacts of American Film Institute. Focused on groundbreaking int'l directors, large retros & tributes & new technologies. Entries must be LA premieres w/ no previous local TV or theatrical exposure; no limitation on completion date. Fest receives wide print coverage in trade, *LA Times*, *NY Times*, etc. & local & int'l TV. Fest encompasses AFI Nat'l Video Festival, which provides nat'l showcase for new works by ind artists as well as screenings of int'l TV & historic U.S. broadcast TV. Fest is open to public; videomakers not paid a fee. All video entries must have been orig prod in video or computer media. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4". Entry fee: $25 film/video. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Gary McVey, executive director, AFI Los Angeles Int'l Film Fest, 2021 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7707; fax: (213) 462-4049.

ALFRED I. DUPONT-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AWARDS, August-Nov., NY. Presented annually for outstanding work in TV & radio news & public affairs. Cats incl. network, local & cable TV, as well as ind prods & radio. Local TV station entries judged according to market size. Programs must have orig aired betw July 1 of previous yr & June 30 of current yr. Formats: 1/2", radio/audio cassette. Entry fee: $50-$100. Deadline: Mid July. Contact: Jonnet Abeles/Denise Figueroa, Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, Alfred I. duPont Center for Broadcast Journalism, Graduate School of Journalism, 701 Journalism, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027; (212) 854-5047; fax: (212) 854-7837.

ASPEN FILMFEST, Sept. 25-29, CO. Now in 18th edition, Aspen Filmfest "celebrates today's diverse & exciting ind films, incl. newest in feature, foreign, doc & short subject films under 15 mins." at its annual fest, held for five autumn days in Rocky Mountains. Film selected on "concept & execution, originality & creativity, style & technical excellence." Entries must have been completed since Dec. 1 of preceding yr & not submitted to previous Aspen Filmfests or Aspen Shortsfests. No purely instructional or promotional films accepted. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Wendy Staton, Aspen Filmfest, 110 East Hallam, Ste. 102, Aspen, CO 81611, (970) 925-6882; fax: (970) 925-9570.

CABLE ACE AWARDS, early Dec., DC. Competition for cable programming recognizes both domestic & int'l entries. In domestic cats, program must have initial world exhib on nat'l or regional cable network in United States or be co-prod & have initial US exhib through nat'l or regional cable network dist (co-prods are defined as result of co-financing business arrangement in which partnership & commitment to air program on US cable network precedes start of prod; there is U.S. producer(s), U.S. prod company(ies) or U.S. cable network involved in creation & execution of program; & form & content of program must either be dictated by U.S. cable network or be result of creative collaboration betw partners; programs modified for U.S. cable networks eligible if they contain substantial alterations). Int'l cats designed for programs acquired by American cable networks but prod orig & primarily for exhib outside U.S. To be eligible, program must have initial U.S. exhib through nat'l or regional cable network dist & initial U.S. debut no later than 36 months after initial exhib abroad. Domestic cats: Informational (educational/instructional special/series; public affairs special/eries; entertainment/cultural doc; environmental/nature doc special; doc special/series; talk show series; magazine show special/series; news special/series; extended news or public affairs coverage; recreation/leisure special/series; business/consumer programming special/ series); Sports (sports events coverage special; sports events coverage series; sports information special/series; sports news series); Entertainment (music special/series; comedy special/eries; movie/miniseries; dramatic or theatrical special; dramatic series; performing arts special/series; variety special/series; game show special/series); Children's Programming (children's special/series (under 6/over 7); children's educational or informational special/series); Specialty Programming (fictional short form special/series; non-fictional short form special/series, animation special/series). Creative Artists cats incl. performance, host/interviewer, directing, writing, editing, art direction, other. No single program may be entered in more than 1 program cat. No single program from series may be entered as special in any cat. All entries have to be network specific;entrants responsible for choosing appropriate cat for each submission. Winner certificates & statues are awarded. Entries should be addressed to: The Cable ACE Awards, c/o KMA Communications, Ltd., 2141 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 2 East, Washington, DC 20007. Formats: 3/4". Entry fee: $300. Deadline: Early/Mid July. Contact: Competition Director, CableACE Awards, Nat'l Academy for Cable Programming, 1724 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 775-3611; fax: (202) 775-3689.

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, mid Oct., IL. Competitive fest is 1 of oldest int'l film fests in US, now in 32nd yr. Annually shows about 100 feature films & 75 short films from over 30 countries. Awards: Gold Hugo (Grand Prix), Silver Hugo, Plaque, Certificate of Merit, Getz World Peace Award (presented to the filmmaker whose work in any of the competitive cats contributes to a better understanding among people). Cats incl. feature (official competition, out-of-competition, special sections such as critic's choice, world cinema, American inds, special late night screenings, retros, tributes), doc (arts/humanities, social/political, history/biography), short subject, drama, humor/satire, films for children, exp), student (comedy, drama, exp, nonfiction, animation), ind video (short subject, educational, animation, feature, exp, music video), ind video doc (arts/humanities, social/political, history/biography), mixed film/video (short subject, doc, educational, animation, feature, exp, music video), educational (performing/visual arts, natural sciences/mathematics, social sciences, humanities, recreation/sports, other), animation (mixed or pure), TV prod (talk shows, public affairs/political, TV dramas, educational, doc, variety/entertainment, children's programs, TV series, mini-series, news doc, special events/video news release), TV commercial. Films & tapes must have been prod in previous 2 yrs & may be entered by filmmakers, producers, distributors, advertising agencies, clients or owners. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $35-225. Deadline: Mid July. Contact: Entries Director, Chicago Int'l Film & Video Fest, 415 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60610-4697; (312) 644-3400; fax: (312) 644-0784; filmfest@ wwa.com.

CHICAGO LESBIAN AND GAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: REELING 1996, Nov. 8-17, IL. Second oldest fest of its kind in world, screening wide variety of int'l lesbian & gay film & video programs each yr. Fest held at Music Box Theater, 750 seat cinema & at Kino-Eye Cinema, Chicago Filmmakers' 200-seat theater. It offers good exposure as well as potential follow up engagements at Music Box. All formats, genres & lengths accepted. Each yr approximately 120 films & videos showcased. Extensive local coverage, incl. Chicago *Tribune*, Sun *Times*, Chicago *Reader*, WGN-TV, public radio & gay press. Sponsored by Chicago Filmmakers, 2-decades old nonprofit media arts center w/ yr round exhib program of ind film & video & int'l dist project incl. over 600 shorts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $20. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Reeling 1996, Chicago Lesbian & Gay Int'l Film Fest, Chicago Filmmakers, 1543 W. Division Street, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 384-5533; fax: (312) 384-5532; chifilm@tezcat.com; http://www.tezcat.com/~chifilm/homepage.html.

COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 24-26, OH. One of older nontheatrical showcases in country, competitive fest

was founded in 1952. Accepts ind & corporate prod in 9 major divisions w/ about 10 cats in each (97 cats in all). These incl. The Arts; Business & Industry; Education & Information; The Humanities; Health & Medicine; Health & Medicine for the Professional; Religion; Science, Technology & Travel; Social Issues; & TV & Advertising. Other cats incl. Media of Print (brochures/fliers, posters, press kits, study or resource guides, package design); Screenwriting; & Student Competition (animation/exp, doc, drama/comedy, screenwriting). Chris Awards go to best of cat; 2nd place Bronze Plaques, Certificates of Honorable Mention & President's Award (best of fest) are also awarded. Cat winners can qualify for the Academy Award in short doc. Public screenings of selected winners for 2 nights 2 last week in Oct & awards presentation banquet last Thurs in Oct. Organized & presented by Film Council of Greater Columbus, nonprofit educ org founded to encourage arts & sciences of film & video making, support ind & corporate artists, improve public education & elevate standards of quality in film & video literacy. Formats: 16mm, 1/2". Entry fee: $75 & up depending on length. Deadline: July 1. Contact: Joyce Long, awards admin., Columbus Int'l Film & Video Fest, Film Council of Greater Columbus, 5701 North High Street, Suite 204, Worthington, OH 43085; (614) 841-1666; fax: (614) 841-1666; chrisawd@infinet.com; http://www.infinet. com/~chrisawd.

DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL, early Nov., TX. Dallas Museum of Art is showcase for annual fest of new works by ind artists, now in 10th yr. Presented by Video Association of Dallas & Dallas Museum of Art, it features general fest programming ("state of medium—as art, as entertainment, as document, as archive & as commerce"). No cash awards; rental fees paid to participants. Program features Texas Show, juried program of new works prod by Texas artists, Interactive Zone, for interactive works & Kidvid, for works by & for children & teens. Entries must be prod or post-prod on video or shot on film & transferred to video; works previously entered ineligible. Annual audiences est at 5,000-7,000, for program of 150-200 works. Extensive local coverage. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", multimedia, installations. Entry fee: $15. Deadline: Late July. Contact: Barton Weiss, fest director, Dallas Video Fest, Video Association of Dallas, 215A Henry Street, Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 651-8888; fax: (214) 651-8896; bart@onramp.net; http://synapsegroup.com/vfest.

DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, mid Oct., CO. More than 120 films representing over 30 countries showcased at noncompetitive Denver Int'l Film Fest, founded in 1978. Eclectic program incl new int'l fiction films & docs, new American cinema, tributes to major film artists, a children's program, human rights section (WatchFest), environmental films, short subjects, animation & critics screenings. John Cassavetes Award given annually for outstanding achievement in American ind filmmaking. More than 50 filmmakers participate in 10 day event & audiences est. at 20,000-25,000. Entries must be Colorado premieres, completed w/in the previous 18 months. Local press coverage is extensive; coverage as well in industry publications. Entry fee: $25. Deadline:



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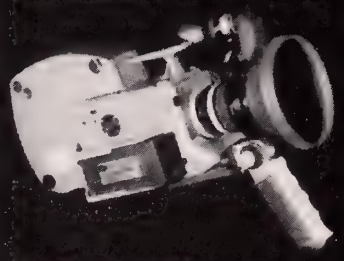
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FESTIVALS

Mid July. Contact: Ron Henderson, director, Denver Int'l Film Fest, 999 18th Street, Suite 1820, Denver, CO 80202; (303) 298-8223; fax: (303) 298-0209.

LITTLE BUFFALO INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 20-21, PA. Held in conjunction w/ Perry County Council of the Arts 13th annual Little Buffalo Fest of the Arts, fest accepts works in cats of narrative, doc, exp, animation. Fest is "seeking work by media makers from around the world that challenges & entertains." Cash prizes awarded. Entries must have been completed after Jan 1, '95 & under 30 min. Held on 156 acre farm on Juniata River in Newport, PA. Formats: 16mm, super 8, VHS, 3/4", Beta-SP; preview on VHS. Contact: Little Buffalo Int'l Film & Video Fest, Perry County Independent Media Arts Center, Lower Bailey Rd, RR Box 65, Newport, PA 17074; (717) 567-3227; fax: 567-3359; info@pcimac.ncit. com.

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., CA. All genres of shorts under 30 min. considered: narrative, docs, animation, experimental. Selected shorts screened at DGA Theater. Fest "designed to give exposure to student/amateur filmmakers by holding screenings for public & industry reps." Selected films eligible for Academy Award noms. Entry fee: $27. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, preview on VHS. Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Tod Ryan, Magic Lantern Film Foundation, 5552 Lincoln Ave., Ste 126, Cypress, CA 90630.

NATIVE AMERICAS INTERNATIONAL FILM EXPOSITION, Aug. 9-15, NM. Inaugural yr of week-long fest of film, video & new media by, w/ & about Native peoples of North, central & South America. Competition cats: dramatic feature, doc, feature, dramatic short, doc short, exp & new technologies. Primary goal is to foster making of new work by & w/ Native artists. Program incl. screenings, competition, workshops & panel discussions w/ directors, producers, cinematographers, editors, etc; curated film series w/ overview of portrayal of Native Americans in films, informal screenings & gala awards banquet. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: June 15. Contact: Native Americas Int'l Film Exposition, Box 2023, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2023; (505) 988-5507; fax: (505) 988-5652.

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL, late Sept./early Oct., NY. Founded in 1963, New York Film Fest is one of major prestigious int'l film fests & uniquely New York film event. Presented by Film Society of Lincoln Center, fest presents average of 25 feature films & 20 shorts from throughout world, incl. U.S., over 17 day period each fall. No cats; all genres & lengths considered. Shorts presented on programs w/ feature films. Each film generally shown twice; docs, retros & the avant-garde program usually shown once. Fest is noncompetitive & there are no awards. All films selected by a committee consisting of two permanent Film Society programmers & three film critics who serve 3-yr terms. They look over about 1,000 films from other fests & from ind submissions. Fest well publicized, in various int'l & out-of-town press coverage (incl. major newspapers & journals); all film programs reviewed in the *New York Times* & the *Village Voice*. Fest programs virtually sell out (average 97% attendance), w/ audiences est at about 50,000. Press conferences after each screening w/ directors, producers & actors. Film entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & must be NY premieres, w/ no prior public exhib or dist, either theatrically or on commercial, educational or cable TV in the U.S. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid July. Contact: Isa Cucinotta, film coordinator, New York Film Fest, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: (212) 875-5636.

NORTHWEST DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 1-3, WA. Sponsored by Washington Commission for the Humanities, fest is 3-day event showcasing 15 feature length & 20 short doc films. All subjects welcome, though a small concentration of films w/ Pacific Northwest subject matter will be chosen. Entries should have been completed after Jan 1995. Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Aug 1. Contact: Lyall Bush, Northwest Documentary Film Fest, Washington Commission for the Humanities, 615 Second Ave, Ste. 300, Seattle, WA 98104-2200; (206) 682-1770; fax: (206) 682-4158; wch@ humanities.org.

PAGAN COMMUNITY CONFERENCE VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 28-29, CA. Fest accepts VHS 15 min. max videos on "any & all things of interest to the pagan (nature spirituality) community. Entry fee: $10. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Barry Dredze, Pagan Community Conference Video Fest, O S 311 Park St., Winfield, IL, 60190; (708) 682-3890.

PROJECT BLACK CINEMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, late Sept., FL. Films exploring images & cultures of Africa & African diaspora are focus of fest, which presents int'l cinema, guests, lectures, exhibits & cultural performances to southwest Florida audience. Fest is committed to "programming that is daring & diverse...films that are a reflection of alternative & often unspoken Black perspectives." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Late July. Contact: Charles R. Stephens/Che Barnett, Project Black Cinema Int'l Film Fest, Box 565, Sarasota, FL 34230; (941) 957-7944.

SANTA BARBARA LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 7-10, CA. Founded in '92, fest accepts works about gay & lesbian life or by gay/lesbian mediamakers. Audience Award given. About 15 films & 10-15 videos are programmed for audiences est at 1,500. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Mid July. Contact: Mark Kerr, Santa Barbara Lesbian & Gay Film Fest, Box 21653, Santa Barbara, CA 93121; (805) 963-3636; fax: (805) 963-9086.

TEMECULA VALLEY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, mid September, CA. Open to romantic & comedy films in 3 cats: U.S. prods, foreign prods & student. Feature length, shorts, ind, low budget & major studio/distributor works eligible. Competition in fest is "viewer's choice"; audience response cards rate films in Best Picture, Best Actor & Best Actress cats. Films that have received network TV, incl. cable, or theatrical release prior to fest not eligible for viewer's choice award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late July. Contact: Fest Director, Temecula Valley Int'l Film Fest, 43174 Business

Park Drive, Temecula, CA 92590; (909) 699-6267; fax: (909) 695-5126.

TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, CO. Over two decades old, fest has outstanding reputation as one of major showcases for new & ind film from around world. Open to professional & non-professional filmmakers working in all aesthetic disciplines: doc, narrative, animation, exp, etc. Features & shorts of all styles & lengths eligible for consideration, provided that they are new works & remain unseen by public until fest's Labor Day Weekend opening. Major feature of fest is that its program is not publicized in advance, creating aura of expectation & excitement for new, eclectic & undiscovered work. Selected short films play either w/ feature or as part of 3 specially selected programs of "Filmmakers of Tomorrow", featuring works by emerging film artists. Held in the mountains of San Juan Range in SW Colorado; historic mining town of Telluride taken over by fest. In addition to premieres, fest incls discussions, frequent opportunities for connection btwn filmmakers & film lovers, special events, retros, past treasures & 3 tributes to guest artists seldom seen elsewhere. Fest attracts large amount of media attention & cross-section of professional media community & film industry (generally sell-out in advance). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: $20-75. Deadline: Late July. Contact: Stella Pence, managing dir, Telluride Film Fest, Nat'l Film Preserve, 53 South Main St., Suite 212, Box B1156, Hanover, NH 03755; (603) 643-1255; fax: (603) 643-5938.

THIS PLACE: BORDER PERSPECTIVES IN FILM AND VIDEO, Sept. 20-23, NM. 2nd edition of fest for films & videos w/ themes relevant to "The Border", incl. Mexico & southwestern US & its unique culture & history. Idea of "border" also extended to topics reflecting its meaning as barrier, margin, bridge, or arbitrary line. Submissions open to recently completed films & videos of all genres by ind. producers & student. Cash prizes & certificates of merit awarded. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4", Beta-SP; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $10 & return postage. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Carol McCall, Mesilla Valley Film Society, Box 1139, Mesilla, NM 88046; (505) 637-3471.

TWIN CITIES BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, early September, MN. Fest is "committed to expanding public knowledge of & access to works of African & African-American ind film & videomakers." It encourages the expansion of the Twin Cities ind film community, supporting African-American film- & videomakers & providing entry point for youth interested in working in film, as well as providing community access to variety of ind films & videos. First edition held in 1995. Fest founder DeJunius Hughes founded the Juneteenth Black Film Fest in 1990, of which the Twin Cities Black Film Fest is offshoot; however, it is not currently affiliated. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $35 (35mm), $20 (16mm), $15 (3/4"). Deadline: Early July . Contact: DeJunius Hughes, artistic director, Twin Cities Black Film Fest, Mana Lapho Films, Box 580546, Minneapolis, MN 55458-0546; (612) 373-0691; fax: (612) 349-2985.

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In the next issue:

Experimental Media: The State of the Field

What does it mean to be an experimental mediamaker today? How has the market changed? What's the future of the field? ***The Independent*** talks to leading curators, distributors, veterans of the field, and newcomers about the state of the art.

FOREIGN

AUGSBURG SHORT FILM WEEKEND, early Oct., Germany. About 90 shorts programmed during weekend fest, which features Int'l Competition & special programs incl. German Competition, Retro of Shorts of Famous Directors & Shorts for children. Awards: Audience Award (int'l competition); Special Jury Award, as well as other awards. Founded in 1992, fest boasts an annual audience of 3,000, w/ around 50 press reps attending. No entry forms; send in VHS cassettes & additional information on film. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Deadline: Late July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Contact: Dieter Rieken/Erwin Schletterer, fest directors, Augsburg Short Film Weekend, Augsburger Kurzfilmwochen ende, Filmbüro Augsburg, Schoeckstrasse 6, D-86152 Augsburg, Germany; tel: 011 49 821 153079; fax: 011 49 821 349 5218.

BAHIA FILM FESTIVAL, mid-Sept., Brazil. "Por Um Mondo Mais Humano" (For a More Humanistic World) is the motto of this fest & market, which marks its 23rd edition this yr. Open to Ibero-American prods as well as non-Iberoamerican prods dealing w/ Latin American subjects. Held in the Brazilian city "that best synthesizes the encounter of the Afro-Indian Iberian & American cultural inheritance." Filmmakers, videomakers, distributors, producers & other professionals involved in audiovisual prod invited. Program incl retros, symposia & exhibs. Int'l jury awards TATU D'OURO prizes in cats: film/video doc; film/video-fiction; film/video animation/exp; film/video made by non-Iberoamerican about Latin America; best feature-length doc film; best video-clip; best director; best script; best photography; best edition; best sound. Int'l Market for Ind Film & Video takes place during fest; its objective is "to create alternative space for commercialization & int'l dist of exp & ind film & video prods." Entries must be on VHS w/ max length of 60 mins. Market will disseminate promotional materials sent by participants. Deadline: Late July (competition); Mid August (market). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4,"1/2," Beta. Entry fee: $20 (market). Contact: Guida Araujo, director/Diana Gurgel, co-director, Bahia Film Fest, Jornada Internacional de Cinema da Bahia, Av. Araujo Pinho, 32, Salvador, Bahia CEP 40 170 000, Brazil; Tel: 011 55 71 235 4392; fax: 011 55 71 336 9299.

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL FILM AND TV FESTIVAL, mid Oct., United Kingdom. Founded in 1985, 11 day event screens "best of world cinema," restored & new prints of classic films, retros, producing events that address topical issues in TV industry; about 65 features shown during fest. Entries must be submitted on VHS PAL. Awards: Bucks First Director's Award, Samuelson City Film Award, Century 21 Award. Highlights in 1995: Francesco Rosi, John Woo, North American inds, Shyam Benegal, Saeed Jaffrey, women in film & TV. Local & nat'l media & print coverage. Deadline: Early July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2" PAL. Entry fee: None. Contact: Fest Director, Birmingham Int'l Film & TV Fest, 40 Central TV, Central House, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2JP, United Kingdom; tel: 011 44 1 21 634-

4213; fax: 011 44 1 21 634-4392.

CINEMASIA, late Oct./early Nov., Belgium. Debuting this yr, new fest is showcase of classical & contemporary films from & about Asia. Organizers plan for it to be "platform of dialogues betw Asian countries & Europe, through audiovisual & multimedia." Each yr it will organize CinemAsia Panorama (screenings of Asian films) & CinemAsia Forum, a professional seminar. The event will be held in the Vendome cinema theater at Porte de Namur. 1996 theme: "Asia, from one end to the other," w/ films from Japan to Turkey; it will also explore: "Women Directors in Asia", "Intimate Strangers/Distant Observers"; "Orient & Reality" (doc films). 1996 forum theme is "European images in Asian countries & Asian images in European countries." Forum intended for policymakers, media artists, art critics, researchers, cultural entrepreneurs & business people. Deadline: Mid July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 34/," Beta, video installations, multimedia. Entry fee: $10. Contact: Alok B. Nandi, director, Cinemasia, Point of View a.s.b.l., 182 Ave. W. Churchill (p.b. 10), 1180 Brussels, Belgium, tel: 011 32 2 644 20 61; fax: 011 32 2 644 33 97.

CORK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 6-13, Ireland. In 1995, Cork celebrated 40 yrs of "bringing to Irish audiences the best in world cinema in all its variety, championing art of short film through its competitive section & providing forum for creative interchange of ideas w/in film community." Fest's program is an eclectic one, bringing together new int'l films w/ other forms of film art, incl. doc, short, animation & exp film. Program also incl.s retro sidebars, seminars & master classes. Entry cats incl. feature films, docs, short films. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs to be eligible for competition sections & must not have screened previously in Ireland in theaters or on TV. Competitive for films under 30 mins. Awards for best Int'l, European & Irish shorts." Also for shorts in black & white. Other sections incl. Irish Showcase & "Focus On" section devoted to filmmakers whose work "excites." Screenings take place at the Cork Opera House & in Triskel Arts Centre, which has a gallery & cafe & is the meeting place & press center for fest. Deadline: July 6. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Michael Hannigan, festival director, Cork International Film Festival, Féile Idirnäisiünta Scannán Chorcaí, Hatfield House, Tobin Street, Cork, Ireland; tel: 011 353 21 27 17 11; fax: 011 353 21 27 59 45, ciff@eirenet.net; http://www.eirenet.net/ciff/.

DEAUVILLE FILM FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FILM, early Sept., France. Now in 22nd yr, this is only European fest devoted to American films. Feature-length films which have not been released in Europe, are French-subtitled & which were prod in preceding yr eligible for selection in showcase for studio films & ind prods. All aspects of American film considered. Formerly non-competitive, fest has just begun competition & features an "American Independents" section; other sections incl "The Panorama of Deauville," which showcases selection of American films looking for dist & Special Deauville, competitive section w/ 2 prizes. Fest also incl tributes & retros. Docs & shorts accepted only if they relate to theme being highlighted in particular yr. U.S. contact: Ruda Dauphin, director, 401 East 80th Street, #28H, New York, NY 10021; (212) 737-5040; fax: (212) 840-5019. Deadline: Early July. Formats: 35mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Fest Director, Deauville Film Fest of American Film, Fest du Cinema Americain de Deauville, 36 rue Pierret 92200 Neuilly, France; tel: 011 33 46 40 55 00; fax: 011 33 46 40 55 39.

EUROPACINEMA, Sept. 27-Oct. 3, Italy. Founded in 1984, feature fest programs abaout 100 films and attracts audiences est at 60,000. Awards to best film, best actor/actress. Format: 35mm. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Felice Laudadio, dir, Europacinema 96, Via Giulia 66, 00186 Rome, Italy; 011 39 6 687 5330; fax: 011 39 6 687 5333.

FIGUEIRA DA FOZ INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CINEMA, early Sept., Portugal. Fest presents, in official selection, competitive (fiction, doc, short films, films for children & videos) & in special programs (homages to directors & nat'l cinematographies) films chosen exclusively according to "criteria of expressive & aesthetic values & favors films w/ social, progressive themes, subjects or approaches." Fest has interest in discovery of new directors & promotion of not so well-known cinematographies, providing cultural framing w/ open debates, meetings w/ directors & other specialists, debates on selected films & publication of extensive material on critical issues of each film. Jury is selected from audience at fest. Sections: Official selection (fiction films for competition or information); "Images & Documents" (doc films, preferably w/ social themes); Short Films (15 min max); Films for Children; Video. Awards (artistic trophies & some cash prizes): Grand Prix for both fiction & doc, short film prize, three silver prizes (best directing, script, image, acting, sound track, music); Prize of Regional Tourism Office to innovative film; Environment Prize; Women's Prize; Europa 2000 Prize for truly European film; City of Figueira da Foz prize (best 1st or 2nd film); Glauber Rocha prize (best film from Third World); Figueira da Foz Discovery Award ($4,500 to best 1st film); Prize Dr. João dos Santos for film concerning education for liberty; Figueira da Foz Prize for Children's Film; Jury Prize. There is also int'l ind film market for films from Latin countries. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 1-1/2 yrs & be Portuguese premieres. Held on Atlantic coast, 200 km from Lisbon & near university city of Coimbra. Many American ind filmmakers have participated in fest & received major awards; fest is considered a meeting point of world ind prod. There is also film market, which presents films on videos to invited buyers. Fest programs from 200-250 films each yr. Fest is a member of the Int'l Short Film Conference, Int'l Center of Films for Children & Young People & CIDALC (Comité Int'l pour la Diffusions des Arts et des Lettres par le Cinéma). Deadline: Mid July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: José Vieira Marques, fest director/Maria Cecília Marques, films management/Joaquim Augusto Vasco, film market, Figueira da Foz Int'l Fest of Cinema, Fest Internacional de Cinema da Figueira da Foz, Apartado dos Correios 50407, 1709 Lisbon Codex, Portugal; tel: 011 351 1 812 62 31; fax: 011 351 1 812 62 28.

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FESTIVALS

FILMFEST HAMBURG, mid-Sept., Germany. Fest, founded in 1992, is noncompetitive survey of new int'l prods, incl. retro section, tribute to producer, special section featuring country or region (in 1995 it was Hong Kong/China/Taiwan), children's films, shorts & presentations of Hamburg prods. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & not shown in more than 1 German fest or city. About 70-90 films are showcased each yr. Fest sponsors Audience Award of DM50,000. Deadline: Mid July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Josef Wutz, fest director, Filmfest Hamburg, Friedenstalle 7, 22765 Hamburg, Germany; tel: 011 49 40 39 82 62 10; fax: 011 49 40 39 82 62 11.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ORNITHOLOGICAL FILMS, Oct. 29-Nov. 3, France. About 40 films on ornithological subjects projected during this 5-day fest, founded in 1985. Associations & orgs concerned w/ environmental issues invited to present activities in various forums. Regional tours organized each day in bird watching areas & children's activities around ornithological subjects are held. 15-20 artists present their photographs, paintings & sculptures. Cash prizes from 10,000FF to 30,000FF awarded. Entries must be French premieres. Deadline: Early July. Formats: 16mm, 1/2," Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Marie Christine Brouard, Int'l Fest of Ornithological Films, Fest Int'l du Film Ornithologique, B.P. 5, 79340 Menigoute, France; tel: 011 33 49 69 90 09; fax: 011 33 49 69 97 25.

LES DIABLERETS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN, ENVIRONMENT AND ALPINE FILMS (FIFAD), early Oct., Switzerland. The object of this fest, founded in 1969, is "to encourage & develop prod of films which stimulate an interest in the Alps & among people who live & work in the mountains." Cats: identity of mountain life (specificities, testimonies, traditions, habits & customs); sports activities in mountains; & safeguarding environment of mountains. Jury composed of mountaineering specialists as well as film & TV experts. Awards: Grand Prix des Diablerets; Diables d'Or (1 per cat); Grain d'Or (awarded to film whose style, realization & conception demonstrate a wish of renewal in mountain film); other special prizes donated by various orgs outside fest. Deadline: Late July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2," Beta. Entry fee: Offr. 15. Contact: Jean-François Morerod, administrative director, Les Diablerets Int'l Fest of Mountain, Environment & Alpine Films (FIFAD), Fest Int'l du Film Alpin et de l'Environnement, P.O. Box 144, Les Diablerets, Switzerland; tel: 011 41 25 53 13 58; fax: 011 41 25 53 23 48.

MOLODIST-KYIV INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, late Oct., Ukraine. "Molodist" means youth & this FIAPF-recognized fest, which was founded in 1970 & is only traditional annual int'l artistic cinema event in Ukraine, celebrates debut & student films. In 1995, it presented program of 120 films from more than 30 countries. An int'l jury awards Molodist Grand Prize "Scythian Dear" ($10,000) as well as winners of different cats: student films (Kodak film prize); feature & short fiction films ($2,500) & doc films. Retros from other film fests also programmed, as well as out-of-competition program that incl screening of films of young Ukrainian filmmakers, debuts of prominent film masters of world cinema & program of film winners from past "Molodist" fests. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs, at professional studios or film schools. No time restrictions on student films; short films must be under 60 min, long features must be over 60 min. Films which have participated & have been awarded prizes in other int'l fests accepted. Fest has debuted some of the former Soviet Union's most impt directors from Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Russia & Baltics. American films first participated in 1994. U.S. contact: Anne Borin, 60 West 66th Street, #35A, New York, NY 10023-6221; (212) 362-3412; fax: (212) 496-1090. Deadline: Mid July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Andry Khalpakhchi, director/Alexander Shpyluk, programmer, Molodist-Kyiv Int'l Film Fest, Saksagansky Strasse 6, 252033 Kyiv, Ukraine, tel: 011 7 044 227 45 57; fax: 011 7 044 227 4557.

MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, late Aug./early Sept., Canada. Only competitive film fest in N. America recognized by FIAPF. Founded in 1977, large & int'ly well-known fest boasts annual audiences of over 300,000 & programming hundreds of films. 19th edition, in 1995, offered 9 cats: Official Competition (features & shorts); "Hors Concours" (official selection, noncompetitive); "Russian Cinema of Today;" "Latin American Cinema;" "Cinema of Today: Reflections of Our Time;" "Cinema of Tomorrow: New Trends;" "Panorama Canada;" "TV Films" & "Tributes." Jury for official competition awards: Grand Prix of the Americas to best film; Special Grand Prix of the Jury, Best Director, Best Actress/Actor; Best Screenplay & Best Artistic Contribution (awarded to technician). Short films compete for 1st & 2nd Prize. Second jury awards Prix de Montreal to director of 1st fiction feature; all 1st fiction feature films presented in all cats eligible; other awards are Air Canada Prize for most popular feature film of fest, Prize for Best Canadian Feature Film awarded by public, Oecumenical Prize & FIPRESCI Prize. Features in official competition must be 70mm or 35mm, prod in 12 months preceding fest, not released commercially outside of country of origin & not entered in any competitive int'l film fest (unreleased films will be given priority). Films prod by & for TV eligible for official competition if their theatrical exploitation is planned; industrial, advertising & instructional films not eligible. Short films must be 70mm or 35mm & must not exceed 15 min. Fest held in 14 theaters, all in downtown Montreal w/in walking distance of fest headquarters. Some 2,500 film industry professionals are annually accredited, incl. directors, producers, actors, buyers, sellers, journalists & reps of other int'l fests. Deadline: Early July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Contact: Serge Losique, fest director, Montreal World Film Fest, Fest des Films du Monde, 1432 Bleury St, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2J1; tel: (514) 848-3883 / 933-9699; fax: (514) 848-3886.

OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, early Oct., Canada. This competitive biennial fest for film & video, founded in 1976, is N. America's only animation fest sanctioned by ASIFA, the Int'l Animated Film Association. It features noncompetitive Int'l Panorama, retros, trib-

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AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

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Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country; call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

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utes, children's program, numerous workshops & social events in addition to competition. Entries must have been completed since June 30 of preceding 2 yrs. Craft entry cats incl. animation, design, story, music &/or sound; animation media: object, computer drawn, mixed media, exp or unusual technique. Awards: Grand Prize of Fest, 2nd & 3rd Prizes, Cat Prizes, Special Jury Prize. Entrants should specify 1 of following cats: prods under 10 min; 10-30 min; first films (student films welcome); children's animated prods not made for TV; educational prods; promotional works (commercials, PSAs); animated prods for TV (series & non-series). Fest shows about 115 new works as well as another 100 in retros. Deadline: Mid July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Chris Robinson, director, Ottawa Int'l Animation Fest, Canadian Film Institute, 2 Daly Ave., Suite 140, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6E2; tel: (613) 232-8769; fax: (613) 232-6315.

PALERMO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SPORTS FILMS, Nov. 11-15, Italy. Sports films & videos are the focus of this competitive fest, founded in 1979; features, shorts & videos prod w/in last 3 yrs eligible. Entries judged in 2 sections: film & video. Top prize is Prix Paladino d'Oro; medal "Citta di Palermo" & check worth 5,000,000 lire. Special sections incl. "Opere in concorso" & "Agonismo & Spettacolo." Deadline: July 31. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2," Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Vito Maggio, director, Palermo Int'l Fest of Sports Films, Rassegna Citta Di Palermo; Int'l Sportfilmfest, Via Emanuele Notarbartolo 1/G, 90141 Palermo, Italy; tel: 011 39 91 611 4968; fax: 011 39 91 611 4968; sporfife@mbox.vol.it; http://www.vol.it/ sportfilm_festival.

PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 12-18, Italy. Fest, founded in 1982, is devoted to films made before advent of sound or films discussing that period. Films lent by film archives or private collectors. Some recent retros are: 1995: Nonfiction; 1994: "Forgotten Laughter: Unknown American Comedians;" 1993: Australia & New Zealand; 1992: Eclair/Disney. The audience of about 1,000 generally incl about 500 specialists (archivists, historians, collectors). Deadline: Early July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Livio Jacob, chairman, Pordenone Silent Film Fest, Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, La Cineteca del Friuli, Via Osoppo 26, 33013 Gemona/Udine, Italy; tel: 011 39 432 980 458; fax: 011 39 432 970 542.

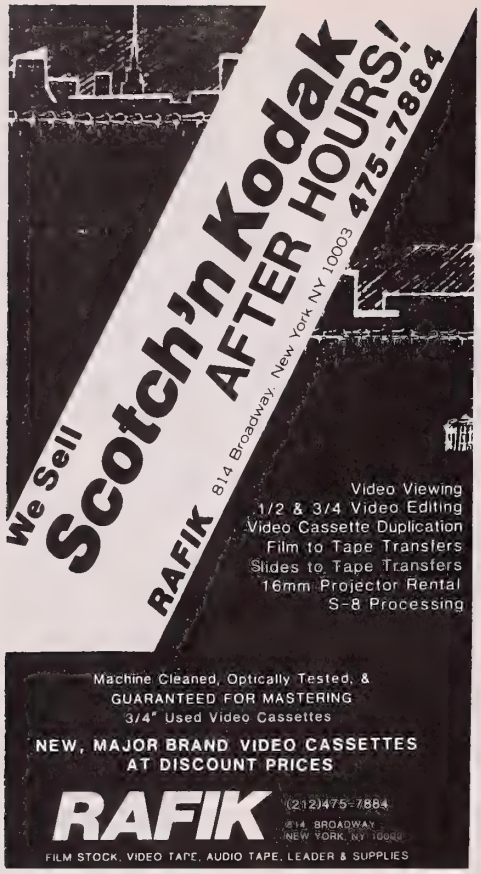
SALERNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 19-25, Italy. Founded in 1945, this is one of the older fests in Italy. Dedicated to "filmmaking in its entirety," it concentrates on all areas of specialized cinema & attracts entries from more than 50 countries per yr. Fest "is particularly recognized as an event which encourages an 'integrative process': the integration of communication, technological development, information & debate in the film industry." One of its interests has been encouragement of amateur filmmaking; fest also focuses on specialty films, exp work, films transferred from 35mm to 16mm & doc, (cultural, scientific or industrial prods). Fest hosts 8 film competitions; ind prods & new talent are allowed to com-

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FESTIVALS

pete in largest competition (Gran Trofeo Golfo di Salerno). Competitive sections: Feature film, Fiction (film & TV); Doc & Short; Exp & Ind; Specialized Filmmaking (education, social, industrial, scientific, sports, etc.); Tourist Films. Workshops, debates on current affairs, seminars, meetings & exhibs dedicated new techniques & inventions are part of program. Deadline: Late July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $50. Contact: Ignazio Rossi, fest director, Salerno Int'l Film Fest, Fest Internazionale del Cinema di Salerno, Casella Postale 137, 84100 Salerno, Italy; tel: 011 39 89 22 36 32, fax: 011 39 89 22 36 32.

SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 19-28, Spain. Held in an elegant Basque seaside city, San Sebastian, which celebrates its 44th year, is one of most impt film fests in Spain, in terms of "glitter," facilities, attendance (over 40,000, incl. 1,400 int'l guests), competition, partying & number of films. City is known for its food, beaches & quaint streets & fest attracts a number of int'l celebrities as well as wide selection of nat'l & int'l press. Fest shows features only—narrative, exp or exp/doc. Fest sections incl. Official Competition; "Zabalteg"i (open zone), section showing films from other fests, first films & films made by jury members; 4 retro cycles; "Fipresci" selection; selection of recent Spanish language films; films for children. In Official Section (18 features), only 35mm features, prod in preceding 12 mos, unawarded in any other competitive fest & not theatrically screened in Spain eligible. Int'l jury awards the following awards: Golden Shell to best film; Silver Shell to best director; Silver Shell to best actor; Silver Shell to best actress; Special Jury Award; two Special Mentions. Directors of selected films (in some cases, actors) are invited to fest; round trip expenses & minimum of five hotel nights covered. The "Zabaltegi" section shows betw 30-40 features. The Euskal Media Award of 25,000,000 ptas, granted by Basque Government to the best 1st or 2nd feature fiction 35mm film is awarded as Euskal Media's contribution in the role of co-producer of winner's next project (joint or individual). This prize will not be invested in film whose financing is complete prior to fest. Audience prize of 5,000,000 ptas awarded to distributor of best film in Zabaltegi section not competing for Euskal Media Prize. Deadline: July 31. Formats: 35mm (competition); 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Fest Director, San Sebastian Int'l Film Fest, Plaza de Oquendo s/n, Donostia, San Sebastian 20004, Spain; tel: 011 34 43 481 212; fax: 011 34 43 481 212.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., Canada. Now in its 21st yr, this is one of most important fests in N. America. Held each Sept. for 10 days, fest celebrates best in recent Canadian & int'l cinema w/ more than 250 films from over 40 countries. Among these is prestigious Perspective Canada Programme, largest annual showcase of contemporary Canadian cinema. Other programs incl. "The Galas" (premieres of major new prods), Special Presentations, First Cinema, Contemporary World Cinema, The Edge, Asian Horizons, Latin American Panorama, Midnight Madness, Directors' Spotlight, National Cinema program, and section devoted to films from Africa and African diaspora. Awards incl. Most Popular Film, Audience Award, International Critics' Award & Media Award. Sales & Industry Office facilitates meetings btwn buyers & sellers attending fest & 3-day business of film symposium provides delegates access to influential people in int'l film & TV industry. Fest known for its innovative & discovery-oriented programming & annually attracts thousands of industry reps, media & filmgoers. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Fest does not accept unsolicited shorts (under 49 min.) from outside Canada. Films must not have been released commercially in Canada prior to fest. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: mid-July, Contact: Piers Handling, festival director, Toronto Int'l Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival Group, 2 Carlton Street, Ste 1600, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 1J3; (416) 967-7371; fax: (416) 967-9477.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, late Sept./early Oct., Canada. Founded in 1982, fest presents approx. 250 films from 40 countries at 6 cinemas over 17 days. It has become 1 of N. America's larger int'l film fests. 115,000 people attend, incl. 200 invited guests representing filmmakers, stars, buyers & sellers, critics & other industry pros from around world. Special sections incl. "Dragons & Tigers: The Cinemas of East Asia" (one of largest annual selections of East Asian films anywhere outside of East Asia); Canadian Images; Nonfiction Features, a 25-film program devoted to current doc filmmaking; "Walk on the Wild Side," a midnight series of films devoted to "lovers of extreme cinema"; Archival Series; "The Screenwriter's Art" & annual film & TV trade forum (a 3-day session of panels & parties). Awards: Air Canada Award for Most Popular Film; Federal Express Award for Most Popular Canadian Film; Dragon & Tigers Award for Young Cinema (cash prize); Rogers Award for Best Canadian Screenplay (cash prize); Nat'l Film Board of Canada Awards for Best Doc Feature & Best Animated Film (cash prize). Fest accepts only feature films (over 70 min.) which have not been screened commercially or broadcast in British Columbia. Deadline: Mid July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Alan Franey, fest director, Vancouver Int'l Film Fest, 1008 Homer Street, #410, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6B 2X1; tel: (604) 685-0260; fax: (604) 688-8221.

VIPER INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL LUCERNE, late Oct., Switzerland. Invitational fest, founded in 1980, presents & discusses developments & new tendencies in int'l exp & artistic media prods. Int'l program selects about 50 new films & videos from about 15 countries; entries must be of exp & noncommercial, innovative & visual based character. Entries should have been completed in prev 2 yrs. Awards: Film Award donated by Regional Conference of Culture (Sfr. 5,000); Video Award donated by Panasonic (Sfr. 5,000); Award of the Canton of Lucerne (Sfr 5,000); Nat'l VIPER Support Award (Sfr 5,000 in courses at ZNM Centre for New Media). Deadline: Early July (invitation). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2," Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Dr. Ch. Settele, fest director, VIPER Int'l Film & Video Fest Lucerne, Int'les Film-un Videofestival Lucern VIPER, Box 4929, 6002 Lucerne, Switzerland; tel: 011 41 1 271 72 27; fax: 011 41 1 271 72 27.

LETTERS: Continued from p. 7

would be provided, what kind of limits, if any, would be placed on programming etc., were entirely between the cable company and the municipality. I was not aware of any federal requirements on public access cable. Please explain.

Lillian Devish
Wheaton, Maryland

The editors respond:

In the 1984 Cable Act, the Federal government recognized that local municipalities could require cable companies to provide public access channels in their markets. More recently, the 1992 Cable Act officially prohibits cable companies from interfering with program content of public access channels. However, it includes an amendment sponsored by Jesse Helms which gives these companies permission to censor "indecent" programming or programs containing "unlawful" (read: homosexual) activity. To protest the Helms amendment, the Washington, DC-based Alliance for Community Media filed a lawsuit against the FCC and has been in court since the passage of the Cable Act four years ago.

Remember the Black Pack

To the editor,

I read "What's New in Black American Film Studies" [Books in Brief, April 1996] with great interest, especially since I teach film to racially diverse classes at California State University, Northridge. However, missing from Adam Knee's article was Erich Leon Harris' new book, *African-American Screenwriters Now: Conversations with Hollywood's Black Pack*, published by Silman-James Press in Los Angeles. In addition to interviews with many notable Hollywood screenwriters, including Carol Munday Lawrence, a documentary filmmaker and Chair of the Committee of Black Writers, Writers Guild of America, Mr. Harris has also interviewed independent filmmakers such as Charles Burnett and Julie Dash, who have been prominent in the pages of *The Independent*. The individual and collective lessons from these interviews are inspiring not only to the African American community, but to film students of all ethnicities.

Alexis Krasilovsky, associate professor
Department of Radio-Television-Film,
California State University, Northridge
Founding Member, AIVF

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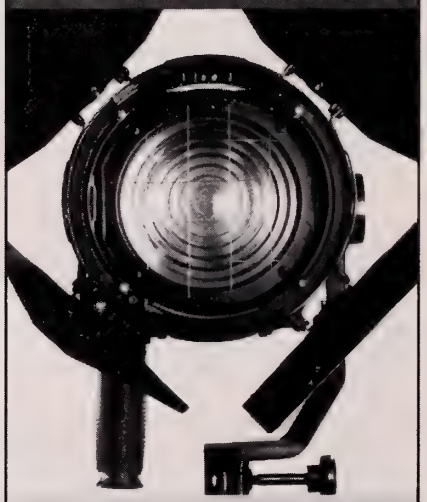
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Competitions

THE ATHENA AWARDS FOR LESBIAN EXCELLENCE IN FILM, VIDEO & TELEVISION, sponsored by Northern Arts/The Naiad Press, honors exceptional works by &/or about lesbians & lesbian issues. Competition awards thousands of dollars worth of prizes from film/video labs. Features, shorts, doc, experimental, animation & all forms of television programs accepted. Submission format: VHS-NTSC only. Entry fee: $25. Deadline: July 10. Awards announced August 15. For entry form send SASE to Awards Coordinator, Athena Awards, Box 201, Williamsburg, MA 01096; (413) 268-9301; fax 268-9309.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS seeks 2-10-minute TV scripts from indigenous Pacific Islanders on Pacific Island cultural themes. Accepting all genres, both fiction and nonfiction. Winning scripts will be produced and later broadcast on public TV. Student category. Deadline: June 3, 1996. For application forms and details, contact PIC, (808) 591-0059, fax (808) 591-1114; piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu; website: http://planet-hawaii.com/~ pacislanders.

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST is accepting scripts from throughout US. 5 to 6 winners will be chosen to receive $500 cash award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: Ongoing. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop National Contest, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

Conferences • Workshops

8TH SOUTHEASTERN MEDIA INSTITUTE, June 15-23, 1996 in Columbia, SC. Weekend & week-long workshops w/ award-winning ind. & industry film video artists in: Producing Directing the Ind. Doc; Camcorder Workshop; Digital Editing; Hi8 to Broadcast; Video Prod.; Exploring Multimedia; CD-ROM & the Internet; Marketing & Distributing Ind. Film; Screenwriting; Film Criticism; more. Discount for early reg. For brochure: South Carolina Arts Commission Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696, fax 734-8526; mswisher@scsn.net.

ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA (ACM) addresses problems faced by public access & community TV directors and staffs nationwide at its National Conference, July 17-20 in Washington, D.C. ACM National Office: (202) 393-2650.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION offers workshops, lectures & seminars in all facets of video. Contact BFVF, 1126 Boylston St., ste. 201, Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540, bfvf@aol.com.

CAMCORDER FOR BROADCAST TV. Workshop for all skill levels, 7/29-8/2 at Univ. of Hawaii Film/Video Institute. Instructor Skip Blumburg produces for *The 90's*, *National Geographic TV*, Sci-Fi Channel, *Sesame Street*. Contact (808) 956-3422 or www.summer.hawaii.edu.

IMAGE, INNOVATION & PRESENTATION: THE STATE OF THE ART, June 20-23. Symposium on the current & future state of experimental media. Screenings & discussion at the Univ. of Colorado at Boulder. (303) 492-4708.

NEW YORK FILM/VIDEO COUNCIL, the oldest nonprofit serving the ind. film & video community in NYC, will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a special program at MoMA on June 20 at 6 pm in the Titus Theater. Event will feature notable guest speakers and film/video works from five decades of ind. film & video. Additional screening of film & video works presented at MOMA's Titus 2 Theater, 3 pm, June 20. Admission on Thursday nights is on a pay-what-you-wish basis. Reception to follow. For info, call (212) 330-0450.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation and Tax Exemption," and more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

Films • Tapes Wanted

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX, ind. producer offering cable access venue for ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Works longer than 40 min. may be aired in 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment; credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Prods, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, a Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, is accepting all genres, under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled with name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172, wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu, WWW: http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel.



BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia and Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For more info contact Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

CHARISMATIC MASS TELEVISION seeks media art shorts for new monthly screening series. All genres accepted, any length. Ongoing deadline. Send artist statement, videotape & SASE. 3/4" preferred, Hi8 or 1/2" OK; returnable with SASE. Syracuse University, Art Media Studies, attn: Justine Wood, 102 Shaffer Art Bldg., Syracuse, NY 13244.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for the *Spirit of Dance*, a live, 1-hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

ELBOWS MORGAN SHOW, a biweekly public access TV show, seeks creative/tasteful VHS SP-speed videos up to 8 min. Most genres accepted. Animation, music, new media a plus. Send labeled tape & SASE to: Elbows Morgan Show, PO Box 6281, New York, NY 10128-0003.

FROG PRODUCTIONS seeks student/independent fims and videos for cable access TV show. Any length genre, VHS preferred, 1/2" or 3/4" acceptable. Include info about work/artist, SASE if return desired. Fred W. DeVecca, Frog Prods, Box 158, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.

GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for *Living With AIDS*, a half-hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no orignals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present

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The School of Communication integrates the adjacent and overlapping areas of study of advertising, critical studies, interaction studies, intercultural and international studies, public relations, media management, new media studies, television policy and criticism, television, film, and new media production and criticism, electronic and print journalism. It enrolls 1,000 undergraduate and 125 graduate students. In the area of new media studies the school is involved in the development of a course offered via the World Wide Web and a certificate program in multimedia design and management.

To apply: Send cover letter describing research/creative work and teaching experience; resumé or vita; and three to five current letters of reference to: New Media Search Committee, Attention Greg Durbin; School of Communication, San Diego State University; San Diego CA. 92182-4561. Application screening will begin April 15 and continue until position is filled . SDSU is an AA/EO Title IX employer and encourages applications from underrepresented groups

NOTICES

person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, Living with AIDS Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8 min) videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone # to: *In the Mix*, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

IND. FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, cable access show seeks student & ind. films & videos to give exposure. Send 3/4" format w/ paragraph about artist & work. *The Independent Film & Video Showcase*, 6755 Yucca St., #8, Hollywood, CA 90028, attn: Jerry Salata.

THE KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape with brief bio to Lisa Deanne Smith, c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson Street, 6th fl., New York, NY 10013. If tape return desired, also include self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.

NEW DAY FILMS, the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. (914) 485-8489.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS, series broadcasting selected works statewide on public TV, seeks works of any genre (except corporate/instructional) produced by ind. artists currently residing in NC. Modest monetary compensation & telecast filmmaker interview of artist for works selected. Entry fee: $15 for individuals, $5 for students & NC Media Arts Alliance members; separate fee for each submission. Contact Ellen Walters, NC Visions, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg., UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax 5039; ncvision@hamlet.uncg.edu.

OCULAR ARCADE, new on ACTV in Columbus, OH, showcases ind. video (art, doc, experimental). Send Hi8, VHS, or 3/4" dub to: *Ocular Arcade*, D. Master, 135 West 1st Ave., Columbus, OH 43201.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/Williamsburg area of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Please call or send SASE for info: Ocularis, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

SAN FRANCISCO SHORT FILMS, a new organization dedicated to supporting the short narrative film as a unique art form, seeks films under 35 min. for screening programs. Filmmaker must be resident of 415, 510, 408, 707, 916, or 209 area code regions in Northern CA. Films must have been completed on or after Jan. 1, 1993. All formats OK, but submit preview in VHS to P.O. Box 424520, San Francisco, CA 94142. Submissions can also be brought to monthly meeting, held first Thursday of each month at 7 pm at Colossal Studios, 15th St. & DeHaro.

SEEKING WORKS by ind. filmmakers. 16mm, 8mm & video for screening series in downtown Manhattan. Send VHS copy to Leslie Napoles, c/o CRC, 7th fl., 435 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast. Submit to: EDGE TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED for exhibitions/screenings & collection of essays considering the relationships between Middle East & the West on personal or geo-political scale. Will be looking at crises of identity, nationalisms/borders, naming, gender/sexuality, class & exoticization of difference. Send documentation of work in any medium, w/ postage if return requested: Public Domain, 186 Avenue B, #5, New York, NY 10009; ph/fax (212) 982-8967.

SUDDEN MEDIA FESTIVAL seeks student videos and films. Open categories. Work must have been completed during undergrad. or grad. study only. Max. length: 15 min., no limit for # of entries but each entry must be on a separate tape. Send VHS preview copy, 50 wd. synopsis, bio, B/W photo, SASE, and $15 entry fee per title. 3/4" copy must be made available for program master. Send no fiber-fill envelopes. Deadline: Sept. 1, 1996. Sudden Media, Hartford Art School, Univ. of Hartford, West Hartford, CT 06117.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA seeks VHS submissions, any style, content or length, for Student Union Gallery video installation, "Today's Special: Video Diner" in Oct. 1996. Forum for alternative videos for dialogue on a variety of issues. Send VHS, résumé, brief statement/description, & SASE for tape return to: Vikki Dempsey, coordinator, Box 454, Tucson, AZ 85702; (502) 884-1354.

UNQUOTE TV, 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing new, innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, experimental, performance works under 28 min. Seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote TV*, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos &

films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length is fine. One hour weekly show, with videos followed by information on the makers. Send VHS or SVHS to *World of Insanity*, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

PUBLICATIONS

AEIOU.2 (ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION INFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE) provides descriptions and submission information on over 220 exhibition venues, nat'l & int'l, showing challenging, alternative ind. film & video. Avail. for $7 (incl. addressed mailing label) from AEIOU.2, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, a computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 9577.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH GRANTS 1996, providing current info on nearly 6,000 funding sources, is now available. 1,224 pp. $135 plus 10% for shipping & handling, as well as sales tax in AZ & CA. To order, contact The Oryx Press, 4041 North Central Ave., ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; (800) 279-6799.

G. K. HALL & CO. announces publication of *Index to American Photographic Collections, 3rd Enlarged Ed.*, edited by Andrew Eskind. New edition locates work of more than 65,000 photographers in 585 collections, as well as new computerized photo info. 1,024 pp. $195. For info: (212) 654-8452; To order: (800) 223-2336, or Order Dept., Simon & Schuster, 200 Old Tappan Rd., Old Tappan, NJ 07675.

IFFCON 96 TRANSCRIPTS now available. Topics discussed by financiers, commissioning editors & producers during the 3rd annual International Film Financing Conference included foreign TV opportunitites, international distribution, rallying US dollars, navigating European film funds. For a copy, send $36 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at http://www.mediaalliance.org.

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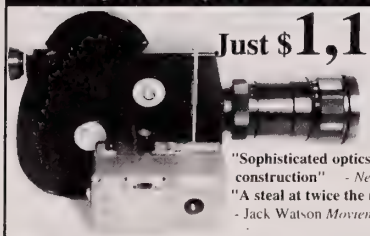
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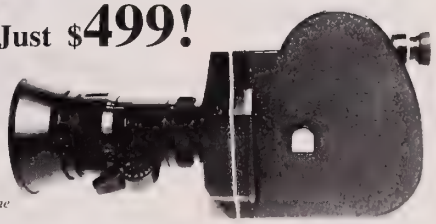
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NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION offers *History for Hire: Using Cultural Resources as Film Locations*, an ongoing series illustrating the benefits & drawbacks of film prods in museums, private residencies and along historic streets. $6 per issue; 10+ copies at $3 plus shipping & handling. Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 673-4286.

SHORT VIDEO MOVIES: To finish our handbook on the short video prod. process, we want to include your experiences w/ improvised scenarios or scripts, non-professionals or pros. Let's trade reels. Contact David Shepherd, Group Creativity, 2 Washington Sq. Vill. #70, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-7830.

THE SQUEALER, the quarterly journal produced by Squeaky Wheel (a nonprofit media arts center) puts an upstate NY spin on a wide range of media-related subjects—from reviews, essays, fiction artwork & interviews to commentary on issues affecting ind. mediamakers. Once per year *The Squealer* publishes "State of the State," a comprehensive resource issue w/ detailed information on upstate media arts organizations, access centers, schools & coalitions. Subscriptions $15 per year. Contact Andrea Mancuso, Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; http://freenet.buffalo.edu.~wheel/.

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LESBIAN & GAY FILM & VIDEO, edited by Jenni Olson, is just out from Serpent's Tail publishers. Features more than 2000 catalog entries, complemented w/ extensive film stills, short essays on gay & lesbian films, a distributor & subject index, a chapter on how to organize your own film/video festival, a directory of international gay & lesbian film festivals, a bibliography & a filmmakers' top ten survey. Serpent's Tail (212) 741-8500.

NOTICES

RESOURCES • FUNDS

APERTURE INC., a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers grant of $10,000 to first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. For info on 1996 Aperture Grant, send SASE to Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on ongoing basis. Contact BFVF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax 536-3576; bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat and 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propoganda, promotional and commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers,

dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

DCTV Artist-in-Residence now accepting appls for $500 worth of equipment access on ongoing basis w/in 1 yr. When 1 funded project is complete, DCTV will review appls on file & select next project. Pref. given to projects already underway. For appl., send SASE to: AIR, c/o DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10013-4435.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION offers awards from $10,000-$350,000 to support various stages of independent film and video production and script development. Proposals should bring original, challenging Asian American stories to the public airwaves. Janice Sakamoto, NAATA, 346 9th St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814, fax: (415) 863-7428.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS OFFICE offers funding for American artists to increase worldwide recognition of the excellence of arts in the United Srates, or to increase public understanding of cultural influences from abroad that invigorate American society. Deadlines run from May to June, 1996. Call International Partnerships Office, NEA, (202) 682-5422.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES 1997 SUMMER STIPENDS support two months of full-time work on projects that will make a significant contribution to the humanities. College faculty members must be nominated by their home institutions, while others may apply to the program directly. The stipend amount is $4000 & the application deadline is October 1, 1996. Contact (202) 606-8551; stipends @neh.fed.us; http://www.neh.fed.us.

ON TRACK VIDEO, a leading New York-based post production facility, announces a new interactive question and answer Worldwide Web site offering video postproduction help and advice to industry professionals: http://www.otv.com.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from

NOTICES

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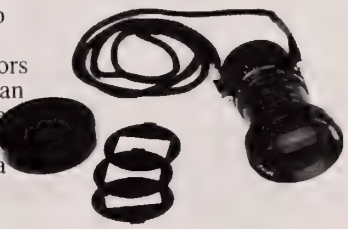
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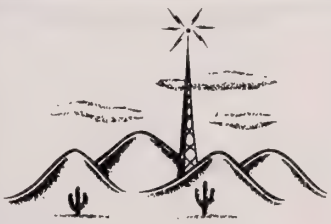
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POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr: $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center offers opportunity to study the techniques of video in intensive 5-day residency. Artists work on variety of cutting edge & hi-tech equipment. Appls must incl. résumé & project description, as well as videotape of recent work (if you are a first time applicant), either 3/4" or VHS formats, w/ SASE for return. Deadline: July 15, 1996. Write: ETC Ltd., 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

STANDBY PROGRAM is a nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to providing artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post-prod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: The Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER is dedicated to educators interested in using video technology as a learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

WANTED: INFO ON STOLEN CAMERAS. There has been an increase in incidents of stolen professional cameras, both in NY and nationally. In Tri State NY region many cameramen have had similar thefts—four men approach, one distracts him/her while other 3 take camera. I am collecting info & organizing an investigation, & would like to speak w/ anyone who has info or has experienced theft. Contact: Box 581, Ithaca, NY 14851.

AIVF ON LINE
For membership information, news from the AIVF salons, and advocacy updates, visit our new Web site at:
http://www.virtualfilm.com/aivf/
You can also visit AIVF's America OnLine niche under:
KEYWORD: ABBATE

MEMORANDA: Continued from p. 64

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Border Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Austin, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Houston, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: David Mendel, (713) 529-4185

Kansas City, MO:
When: 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Los Angeles, CA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Pat Branch, (310) 289-8612

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

Seattle, WA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Cathy Hern, (206) 301-9110

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Tucson, AZ:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC:
Call for dates and locations
*Contact:*Sowande Tichawonna, (202) 232-0353

NOTICES

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

The Center for Arts Criticism, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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ACES Media Arts Center, New Haven, CT; ACS Network Productions, Washington, DC; AVD Hans Strom Biblioteket, Volda, Norway; AVFN Int'l, Anchorage, AK; Access, Houston, TX; Alternate Current, NY, NY; The American Center, Paris, FR; American Civil Liberties Union, NY, NY; Ann Arbor Community Access TV, Ann Arbor, MI; Ann Arbor Film Festival, Ann Arbor, MI; Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY; John Armstrong, Brooklyn, NY; Art Matters Inc., NY, NY; The Asia Society, NY, NY; Assemblage, NY, NY; Athens Center for Film & Video, Athens, OH; Austin Film Society, Austin, TX; Benton Fdn., Washington, DC; Blackside, Inc., Boston, MA; CNC, Washington, DC; Carnegie Inst., Pittsburgh, PA; Carved Image Productions, NY, NY; Center for Investigative Reporting, San Francisco, CA; Center for New American Media, NY, NY; Chicago Video Project, Chicago, IL; Coe Film Association, NY, NY; Colelli Productions, Columbus, OH; Columbia College, Chicago, IL; Command Communications, Rye Brook, NY; Communication Arts-MHCC, Gresham, OR; Community Television Network, Chicago, IL; Denver Film Society, Denver, CO; Duke Univ., Durham, NC; Dyke TV, NY, NY; Eclipse Commun., Springfield, MA; Educational Video Center, NY, NY; Edwards Films, Eagle Bridge, NY; Empowerment Project/Kasper & Trent, Chapel Hill, NC; Eximus Company, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Fallout Shelter Productions, Mansfield, OH; The Film Crew, Woodland Hills, CA; Fox Chapel High School, Pittsburgh, PA; Great Lakes Film & Video, Milwaukee, WI; ITVS, St. Paul, MN; Idaho State Univ., Pocatello, ID; Image Film Video Center, Atlanta, GA; Int'l Cultural Prgm, NY, NY; Int'l Film Seminars, NY, NY; Jewish Film Festival, Berkeley, CA; KPBS, San Diego, CA; Komplex Studio Merdeka, Selangor, Malaysia; Little City Fdn./Media Arts, Palatine, IL; Long Bow Group Inc., Brookline, MA; Manhattan Neighborhood Network, NY, NY; Media Arts, Palatine, IL; Mesilla Valley Film Society, Mesilla, NM; Milestone Entertainment, Irving, TX; Miranda Smith Productions, Boulder, CO; Missoula Community Access, Missoula MT; NAMAC, Oakland, CA; NRX/DPH, NY, NY; NY Inst. of Technology, Old Westbury, NY; Nat. Center for Film & Video Preservation, Los Angeles, CA; Nat. Latino Community Center/KCET, Los Angeles, CA; Nat. Video Resources, NY, NY; Neighborhood Film/Video Project, Philadelphia, PA; Neon, Inc., NY, NY; New Image Productions, Las Vegas, NV; New Liberty Productions, 911 Media Arts Center, Seattle, WA; Philadelphia, PA; Ohio Arts Council, Columbus, OH; Ohio Univ., Athens, OH; One Eighty One Productions, NY, NY; Outside in July, NY, NY; Pennsylvania State Univ., Univ. Park, PA; Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Pittsburgh, PA; Post Modern Productions, Elsah, IL; Promontory Point Films, Albany, NY; Public Benefit Corp., Detroit, MI; Rainy States Film Festival, Seattle, WA; Medina Rich, NY, NY; Paul Robeson Fund/Funding Exchange, NY, NY; Ross Film Theater, Lincoln, NE; Ross-Gafney, NY, NY; SUNY/Buffalo-Dept. Media Studies, Buffalo, NY; San Francisco Art Inst., San Francisco, CA; School of the Art Inst., Chicago, IL; Scribe Video Center, Philadelphia, PA; Southwest Alternate Media Project, Houston, TX; Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, NY; Strato Films, Hollywood, CA; Sundance Inst., Los Angeles, CA; Swiss Inst., NY, NY; Terrace Films, Brooklyn, NY; Thurston Community Television Archive, Olympia, WA; Trinity Square Video, Toronto, Ontario; Tucson Community Cable Corp., Tucson, AZ; UMAB School of Social Work Media Center, Baltimore, MD; Univ. of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI; Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE; Univ. of Southern Florida, Tampa, FL; Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI; VA Festival of American Film, Charlottesville, VA; V.I.E.W. Video, NY, NY; Vancouver Film School, Vancouver, BC; Veritas Int'l., Elsah, IL; Video Data Bank, Chicago, IL; Video Pool, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Video Video Ltd., NY, NY; Vox Productions, Inc., San Francisco, CA; WNET 13, NY, NY; WTTW Chicago, Chicago, IL; W. Hollywood Public Access, West Hollywood, CA; Wexner Center, Columbus, OH; Women Make Movies, NY, NY; York Univ. Libraries, North York, Ontario.



BY PAMELA CALVERT

SUMMER EVENTS

OPEN DISCUSSION: SELLING YOUR WORK TO CABLE

Explore the standard provisions of cable contracts and how they affect independents with Robert Freedman, AIVF/FIVF's legal counsel. This is not a workshop, but a forum for independent producers to discuss their experiences with cable in a community of peers. Free; pre-registration helpful but not required.

When: Tuesday, June 4, 6:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF offices
Contact: Pamela Calvert (212) 807-1400 x223

MEET AND GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF offices. *Free; open to AIVF members only. Limited to 20 participants. RSVP required; (212) 807-1400 x222.*

MARCO MUELLER
Director, ***Locarno Film Festival***
Come hear about this major European festival's new independent film initiative at the MIFED Market in Milan.
When: Tuesday, June 11, 6:30 p.m.

IN THE WORKS: AN OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

This is our works-in-progress program for members. Each evening, four makers show 10 minutes of work and have the chance to get the honest and constructive feedback needed to take a project to the next stage. *Slots assigned on a first-registered, first-served basis, and are available to AIVF members only. You do not need to register or be a member to attend.*

When: Tuesday, June 18, 7:00 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Contact: Leslie Fields, (212) 807-1400 x222

DO WE HAVE YOUR TAPE? LAST CHANCE TO READ THIS!

For many years, AIVF has maintained a large archive of videotapes of members' work. In the process of moving to our new space, we came to the inescapable conclusion that we can't continue this resource. If you sent a tape to us for the archive and would like it back, please call Pam Calvert, (212) 807-1400 x 223. *If we do not hear from you by* June 30, *we will erase your tape* and donate it to a nonprofit media center for stock. We have every intention of continuing to provide information about our members' work to programmers, distributors, funders, and educators; to that end, we are working on a long-term project to create a computer database of work. Stay with us, and we'll keep you posted.

NEW IN THE AIVF LIBRARY

This spring we've acquired several excellent new resources for members to consult in our library:

Grantseekers will find a goldmine of information in the **National Network of Grantmakers 1996 Directory**. The NNG is an organization of progressive funders: individual donors, trustees, board members, and employees of grantmaking programs. The Directory is the result of a yearly survey of NNG members about their grantmaking programs or the foundations for which they work. The profiles include both basic information and an outline of the program areas in which each funder makes grants. The directory additionally includes a section on helpful resource organizations and is indexed by funders' location, interests, and populations funded. This is truly one of the most substantive funder compilations available. To purchase your own copy of the directory, call NNG at (619) 231-1348.

Another directory available in the office is the **1995-1996 International Documentary Association Membership Directory and Survival Guide**. Based in LA, IDA is a nonprofit organization that supports nonfiction film- and videomakers. The *IDA Directory* includes names, addresses/telephone numbers, credits, and brief profiles of the members. The exhaustive *Survival Guide* includes U.S. and international broadcasters who present or produce documentary work; a guide to grantwriting excerpted from *The Independent* and a list of documentary funding resources; archives and stock footage libraries; documentary distributors; festivals, competitions and markets; trade and professional organizations; state, local, and international film commissions; international production tips; travel info, and even worldwide listings for weather forecasts. If you'd like your own copy, call IDA: (310) 284-8422.

AIVF member *Patricia Goudvis* has generously donated two valuable resources to AIVF: **Writing Proposals to Channel 4** and the **1995/96 Channel 4 Producers Guide**. Launched in Britain in 1982, Channel 4 obtains a "substantial proportion" of its programming from independent producers, much of it commissioned. The *Producers Guide* provides a comprehensive overview of the commissioning process, including a directory of editors and a profile of each of Channel 4's programming areas, as well as business, technical, and publicity requirements. *Writing Proposals to Channel 4* is a basic guide for the beginning producer to evaluate his or her project before submitting a proposal for consideration: questions to ask yourself, do's and don'ts, tips on what makes a good proposal. This is sound general advice for any type of proposal, and will be particularly valuable to those just entering the field.

Finally(!), we have reconstructed the **Festival and Distributor Resource Files**. All the information compiled to create the new AIVF *Guides* to festivals and distributors—catalogs, profile information, entry forms—has been collected and filed here in our library. You can get in-depth information about a festival or distributor that you've read about in the *Guide* before sending them your application or calling with a pitch. As the questionnaires in the back of the books are returned, we will also have data for a producers' "consumer's bureau," so you can check on what colleagues have experienced with a given distributor or festival before testing your own luck.

We are committed to adding resources to our library regularly; if there is a book, directory, or periodical that you think we should acquire, let us know: contact Pamela Calvert, (212) 807-1400 x 223. The library is open weekdays 11 am - 6 pm.

WEEKEND HOURS

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Morrie Warshawski

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Price: $85 member/$100 others

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James Schamus

Schamus, co-director of NY production company Good Machine, has taught this now-legendary workshop all over the country to sell-out crowds. Learn the ins and outs of guerrilla cost control as only Schamus can teach it, in what amounts to a crash course in indie filmmaking.

When: Saturday, June 29, 10 am - 2 pm
Where: Manhattan location
Price: $55 member/ $70 others

How to Finance Your Film/Video Project in a Post Funding Universe

In a world with little or no funding, what are your options in financing your project? **Mary Jane Skalski** of Good Machine moderates this panel of finance professionals to unravel the mysteries of limited partnerships, co-production, sub-chapter-s and other possibilities.

When: Saturday, July 13, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
Price: $35 member/ $50 others

How to Find and Work with a Distributor

Looking for a distributor and don't know quite where to start? Come to this half day workshop and hear various distributors talk about what a producer should know before seeking a distributor, the role of the distributor, and the distributor's relationship to the producer.

When: Saturday , July 20, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
*Price: $35 member/ $50 others**

How to Read a Distribution Contract

Don't sign that distribution contract just yet!!! Wait until after you've taken this workshop. Join **Jodi Peikoff** of Sloss Law Offices, and benefit from her experience with John Sayles, Todd Haynes, Richard Linklater, and Whit Stillman. An expert in copyright, intellectual property, and new media, she will guide you through the intricacies of a distribution contract.

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When: Saturday, August 3, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
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July 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 6

Publisher: Ruby Lerner
Editor in Chief: Patricia Thomson
Managing Editor: Dana Harris
Editorial Assistant: Courtney Porter
Contributing Editors: Kathryn Bowser, Luke Hones, Barbara Bliss Osborn, Robert L. Seigel, Esq.
Art Director: Daniel Christmas
Advertising: Laura D. Davis (212) 807-1400 x225
National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Fine Print (800) 874-7082; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press
Send address changes to: *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013.

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent film and video, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@aol.com; http:// www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF/

Periodical Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

Publication of *The Independent* is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Publication of any advertisement in *The Independent* does not constitute an endorsement. AIVF/FIVF are not responsible for any claims made in an ad.

Letters to *The Independent* should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length.

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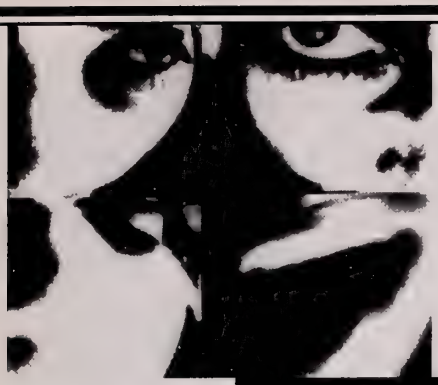
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REVIEWED BY LAURA U. MARKS

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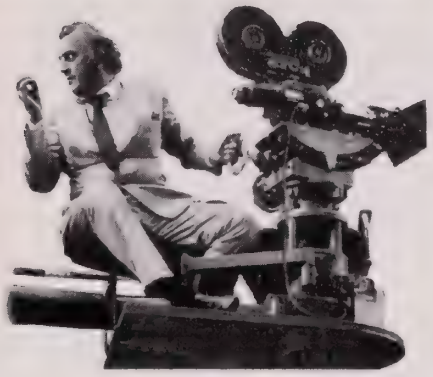
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media news

Indies Back On Track at WNET

Reel New York an Advocacy Triumph

EDITED BY DANA HARRIS

IN A MUCH-NEEDED VICTORY FOR NEW YORK'S independent media community, WNET launched a new series on June 2 showcasing the work of independent producers called *Reel New York*. With a focus on life in and around New York, the locally broadcast series (Sundays at 11 p.m., repeated Tuesdays at midnight) is made up of eight one-hour programs of recent traditional and experimental documentaries and dramatic works. Performance and recording artist Laurie Anderson is the series' host.



Clockwise from top right: A still from Pola Rapaport's *Broken Meat*; series host Laurie Anderson; and Pedro Carvajal's *Citizen Art*, a documentary that chronicles the work of a "culture jammer."
All photos courtesy WNET

Single-minded effort yields 8-week series

In the summer of 1993, WNET cancelled *Independent Focus*, a long-running series of work by independent film and video artists. While *Independent Focus* was saddled with complaints about controversial programming, the station also cited the "great amount of duplication in opportunities for independents" as a reason for the series' axing [see *The Independent*, October 1993].

In the independent community, reaction to the loss of the rare broadcasting opportunity was swift. A group of film- and videomakers joined forces with media arts organizations to look for ways to regain a foothold in broadcasting locally produced independent media. Their group, the Coalition of Independent Producers and Audiences, included representatives from Women Make Movies, Media Alliance, and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers. The coalition met with WNET at the end of 1994 to ask for a locally broadcast series of independent works. The station responded by requesting a formal proposal, and *Reel New York* began to come into focus.

The coalition looked to other showcases around the country as models, and credits San Francisco's *The Living Room Festival* as an inspiration. "*The Living Room Festival* works with thirteen independent media organizations, and each programs one evening," says Terry Lawler, a member of the coalition's advisory committee. "We wanted to have that kind of cooperation for *Reel New York*."

When WNET gave the series a green light at the beginning of this year, the coalition quickly hired Kathy High as curator, a videomaker with extensive experience as a media arts administrator and educator. With less than two months to pull together programming, High sent letters seeking suggestions to more than 100 media arts organizations in the tristate area. With additional suggestions from local distributors and exhibitors, High and Garrison Botts, WNET's producer for *Reel New York*, selected the series' 16 works.

Victory's All in the Timing — and the Pitch

Several circumstances contributed to WNET's apparent change of heart toward independent media programming. "We always had the position that we weren't looking for *Independent Focus* to come back," says Lawler. "*Independent Focus* was made from a national selection of work. We were looking for local producers to have a relationship with the station."

The coalition also took pains to show WNET that it was offering the station a win-win situation. "We weren't screaming and angry," says coalition member and Women Make Movies president Debra Zimmerman. "We showed them we had a constituency they wanted."

Some recent additions to WNET's staff didn't hurt, either. Both WNET's Ward Chamberlain (vice president and managing director) and Tamara Robinson (vice president, national programming) have a reputation for being supportive of independent producers, as does Ann Gorfinkle, the deputy director of programming. "I can't tell you how supportive everyone's been," says High. "I don't know who made the decision to cancel *Independent Focus*, but clearly it wasn't the people I'm working with."

Programming Without Censorship

Despite the viewer complaints WNET had to field during the 16-year run of *Independent Focus*, WNET has set no firm guidelines regarding the nature or content of *Reel New York*. Botts says the only requirements were that the works had to be by local makers and, for this series, focus on life in New York City. "The station is not trying to play it safe," says Botts. "We hope the lineup will appeal to a wide audience.'

Among the works to be screened are Randy Redroad's *High Horse*, a look at the notion of "home" for displaced Native Americans in New York; *Taxi-Vala/Auto-Biography* by Vivek Renjen Bald, an experimental personal documentary exploring immigrant South Asian taxi drivers' visions of the American dream; and Gregg Bordowitz's *Fast Trip, Long Drop*, a documentary that incorporates dramatic segments to explore the maker's experiences as a person with AIDS, his Jewish identity, and mortality. Among the most experimental works in the line-up is *Lost Book Found* by Jem Cohen, a lyrical and visual journey through the streets of New York City.

The series also sketches an invigorating portrait of New York's wide-ranging artistic communities. Howard Weinberg and Nam June Paik's *Topless Cellist: Charlotte Moorman* is a tribute to the late avant-garde performer; *Booyaka!*, by Denise Iris, is a portrait of Jamaican singer Maxine Foster; and *Planet Brooklyn* is a comedy by Regi Allen in which an ambitious filmmaker (played by Allen) tries to make a film about African-American Generation X-ers.

According to Botts, the groundwork laid for *Reel New York* was key to the series' inception. "Everyone has jumped on the bandwagon," says Botts. "Both management and the community have been supportive. We'd like to make this ongoing, but the future of the series depends on both funding and how badly the public wants to see it."

take ACTION

To voice your support for *Reel New York*, call the WNET Information Center at (212) 560-2888.

CYNTHIA CHRIS

Cynthia Chris has written for Felix, exposure, High Performance, Afterimage, *and other publications. Dana Harris contributed to this report.*

Is This It? Bill Defunding Public TV Gathers Momentum

COMMERCIALS ON PUBLIC TELEVISION? STRANGE but true: if H.R. 2979 goes through, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) will go private.

On February 28, Jack Fields (R-TX), chair of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Finance, proposed the "Public Broadcasting Self-Sufficiency Act of 1996." This bill reshapes the Communications Act of 1934 by phasing out public funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and allowing advertising to become a major resource for CPB.

A $1 Billion Airwave Trust Fund

The heart of the bill lies in privatizing CPB. This amounts to CPB losing all federal funding by the year 2001 and replacing those subsidies with a trust fund fed by an unusual resource: airwaves. With the recent upswing in digital broadcast technology, there's a lot of leftover electromagnetic spectrum space. This valuable, if invisible, commodity could be sold through FCC auction or leased to commercial broadcasters.

The bill phases out public funding for CPB and allows advertising to become a major resource.

According to H.R. 2979, the CPB could receive as much as $1 billion from the airwave auction. However, that money wouldn't go directly to public broadcasting; instead, CPB would receive the fund's interest income. Current estimates for the fund's return run between 5 and 8 percent, which amounts to between $50 and $80 million a year. Congress currently allocates $275 million to CPB, and plans to reduce the budget to $250 million by 1998. Making up the difference would be CPB's responsibility and, according to the bill, that could be done with a word from our sponsors.

Replacing Public Support with Commercial Partnerships

Among the bill's amendments is "Expanded Underwriting Opportunities," which permit public TV stations to broadcast commercials. Or, as the bill dubs them, "well-established corporate logos or slogans, even if such logos or slogans include a call to action by the viewer or listener or strictly quantifiable comparative descriptions of products, services, or providers of products or services."

Other features of the bill include "Television Channel Exchanges," in which public television stations could become partners with commercial TV producers. Another wrinkle is "Remunerative Uses of Overlapping Stations"; these allow licensees who have two public TV stations in the same market to auction one off or operate one as a for-profit commercial venture. However, such

MEDIA NEWS

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Ernest Hollings (D-SC), Ranking Member. Room 25 Senate Russell Bldg.; Washington, DC 20510.
You can also reach Larry Pressler (R-SD), Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, at 508 Dirksen Bldg., Washington, DC 20510; (202) 224-5115.

stations couldn't receive CPB financial support.

PBS, ITVS, Community Media Testify

Representatives from public TV and radio organizations testified on February 29 in Washington, D.C., before the House subcommittee. Many advocates, including National Public Radio, criticized the trust fund's $1 billion cap as inadequate. However, most public broadcasting representatives were guarded in their views. At press time, all sides were frantically lobbying to alter the language of H.R. 2979.

"It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, but I have no reason to be optimistic right now," says Deann Borshay, executive director of the National Asian American Telecommnications Association. "I think we are at the beginning of what's going to be a complex legislative process. We have to be very vigilant about what our communities' needs are to make sure our voices are heard."

The bill has been referred to Senate Commerce Committee chair Larry Pressler (R-SD), who is reluctant to address PBS broadcast legislation before the November elections. Pressler is currently in a tight race for reelection and doesn't need the negative media he once received in his home state when he said he supported PBS privatization.

What Was Heard at the Hearing

CPB president and CEO Richard W. Carlson praised the subcommittee for incorporating previous suggestions made by public TV broadcasters, but suggested that the interest from a $1 billion trust fund wouldn't be a sufficient substitute for current government funding.

Dr. Charles W. Sydnor, Jr., an educational TV broadcaster from Virginia, said he was eager to privatize and commercialize his public operation.

Lynn Chadwick, president of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, a public radio group serving rural and minority communities, asked that the language be strengthened to encourage funding for community stations and discourage the "predatory practices by opportunistic public radio stations," which seek more than one outlet per market.

Delano E. Lewis, president and CEO of National Public Radio (NPR), said the bill brings excessive commercial pressures to public broadcasting and was vastly undercapitalized for the long-term needs of public broadcasting. (By early May, NPR had reportedly become more amenable to the proposed legislation.)

The Independent Television Service generally favors the bill, but observed that it doesn't require the CPB to continue funding an independent production organization or guarantee a percentage of public TV dollars to independent production.

"It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, but I have no reason to be optimistic right now."

— Deann Borshay, executive director, National Asian American Telecommnications Association

The five National Minority Public Broadcasting Consortia, which represent Asians, African Americans, American Indians, Latinos, and Pacific Islanders in telecommunications, requested that a minimum of $8 million be allocated to minority public broadcasters as well as an increase in the transitional CPB budget to $300 million. Currently, the consortia receive $5 million in discretionary grants from the CPB.

MAX J. ALVAREZ

Max J. Alvarez is a freelance writer and independent filmmaker based in Bethesda, Maryland.

Key Funding Figures Leave Rockefeller

IT'S A MOMENT OF TRANSITION AT THE ROCKEFELLER Foundation. Janet Sternburg, the person most responsible for shaping Rockefeller's Intercultural Film/Video/Multimedia Fellowship program, stepped down last June as senior program advisor in media. With Sternburg's departure, the foundation's media fellowships are now managed by National Video Resources (NVR), an initiative created by the foundation in 1990 but now an autonomous organization. And Dr. Alberta Arthurs, who is Rockefeller's director of Arts and Humanities and in charge of the division's media funding, will leave the foundation this August.



Left: Leslie Thornton on location for her film *The Great Invisible*, included in the Rockefeller-funded 1992 Whitney exhibit "Re-Mapping Culture(s): Film and the Media Arts." Below: former program advisor Sternburg. Photos courtesy Whitney Museum and Sternburg.

MEDIA NEWS

The Sternburg Legacy

Among Sternburg's favorite projects were those that "would spark other ideas, other projects." Below, a sampling of the opportunities she helped provide for independent media artists:

- In 1991, the foundation formed a partnership with the MacArthur and Lampadia Foundations and created a separate group of fellowships for Latin-American mediamakers.
- A grant helped create the 1993-94 *Living Room Festival*, the San Francisco public television series that features independent film and video co-curated by media organizations.
- A 1993 grant to Video Azimuth helped a worldwide coalition of grassroots media producers hold a symposium in New Delhi on "New Technologies and Democratic Communication."
- The Film Society of Lincoln Center received a 1993 grant to launch the first African Film Festival at the Walter Reade Theater. Program Director Richard Peña says the money was "critical to the serious programming of retrospectives and series of African, Asian, and Latin American films."
- In 1994, the foundation supported a retreat to explore creating a "Media Lab" at the Sundance Institute that would parallel Sundance's Directing and Screenwriting labs. This project explored potential conjunctions of art and ideas and linked artists with new technologies
- The foundation funded the development and design of the CD-ROM *Who Built America?* in 1994. Produced by the American Social History Project, the project was an exemplary prototype of humanities multimedia design. — BA

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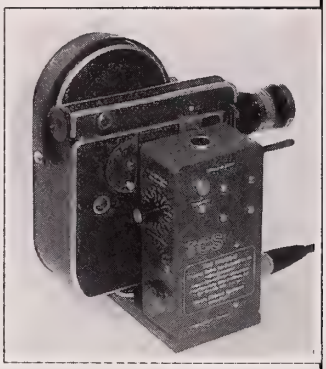
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MEDIA NEWS

Sternburg nurtured emerging artists

Over the last seven years, Sternburg earned a reputation as an independent mediamaker's champion. However, Sternburg says she was ready for a change. "I felt it was time to give my undivided attention to writing," says Sternburg, who teaches at the California Institute of the Arts and boasts an impressive string of publishing and production credits in addition to her foundation work.

Since 1989, 14 Rockefeller Fellowships of $35,000 each have been awarded annually to U.S. media artists working in documentary, narrative, or, more recently, moving image experimentation and interactive media. The program flourished under Sternburg's guidance. She created a unique selection process that begins when about 40 artists, programmers, scholars, and other media specialists each name three gifted media artists who are interested in intercultural issues and convey their vision in innovative ways. This year, an international interdisciplinary selection panel reviewed 109 candidates.

"The nominators are chosen to be aggressively inclusive," says Suzanne Sato, the foundation's former associate director of Arts and Humanities. "The process reaches out to emerging artists and groups not served by other grant programs."

Sternburg also influenced the exhibitions of up-and-coming artists. "Re-mapping Culture(s): Film and Media Arts," a 1992 exhibition co-curated by Sternburg and Whitney Museum film and video curator John Hanhardt, showcased the work of Rockefeller fellows Marlon Riggs, Charles Burnett, Leslie Thornton, Shu Lea Cheang, and DeeDee Halleck. Here, the museum became a working lab when the artists organized screenings of their work with the films and videos that influenced them.

Another seminal project was the landmark 1989 conference "Show The Right Thing," co-sponsored by Rockefeller, the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), and the Film News Now Foundation. "This was an intervention into the sorry state of exhibition, an effort to link work by people of color with institutional exhibitors," says cultural critic B. Ruby Rich, then head of Film and Media Programs at NYSCA. "It encouraged alliances, projects, a sense of empowerment and energy." (For other Sternburg-influenced projects, see sidebar p. 9)

NVR handles Fellowship; Rockefeller, policy

Although Sternburg was a foundation consultant rather than a staff member, she had primary responsibility for the Media Fellowship program. With her departure, management now falls to National Video Resources (NVR). This organization was created by the foundation in 1990 to increase awareness of and access to independent work on video and was spun off as a self-supporting entity in 1994. The foundation is still fully responsible for the fellowships' funding and policy under the direction of Joan Shigekawa, Rockefeller's associate director of Arts and Humanities.

While future directions in media funding are now under review, no radical changes are expected. "I'm reasonably confident that there will be a continuing commitment to current budget levels and to the overall directions in which arts and humanities at the foundation have been going," says Arthurs.

"The Rockefeller Foundation has always supported the originating creative artist," adds Shigekawa. "This is a commitment, however modest, I hope that the foundation can maintain."

BARBARA ABRASH

Barbara Abrash is an independent producer. She is also the associate director at New York University's Center for Media, Culture, and History.



Russ Hexter: 1968-1996

Russell Hexter's humor makes me laugh, even after his death. When he discovered his film *Dadetown* was going to show at Sundance, he became nervous. Russ' favorite way to deal with stress was laughter, and his favorite way to laugh was to make himself do it. He rushed to his computer and drew up a slew of prank business cards. His plan for one in particular was to hand it to people and wander away, gawking at the ceiling. It reads, "Wow! This Sundance thing is pretty cool. This is my first business card ever. This is so wild, man. Hey, whoever you were, nice meeting ya!" The executive would look up and watch a 6'4" beanstalk of a man roam into the crowd. Russ never actually did it, but that night at the computer, he imagined he did. And he laughed.

From the moment I met him at NYU, it was clear he lived to tell stories. His long, gesturing fingers were punctuations sweeping the tale along, connecting the listener to his enthusiasm. Nothing was banal, and no time with him was boring. A couple of weeks ago, the two of us car-

Russ Hexter (right), shooting *Dadetown*.



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ried the print of *Dadetown* to Fed Ex. With his life's success in hand, slapping against his thigh, he spoke of his next project. And with his free hand gesturing, he sped up, excited, leaving me ten paces behind. He was on 11th Street talking to air about a great plot twist as I struggled to hear him from 10th Street.

Dadetown is his legacy. For years he concocted stories as a hobby. He'd write the ideas on whatever pieces of paper were in front of him. Going through his apartment, I've found 5-year-old unopened bills with inspirations scrawled over the Final Notice warning. What I find interesting is how he always wanted to set his ideas in a small town. A science fiction action flick? Small town would be perfect. A great spy-thriller yarn? A great small town spy-thriller yarn. But eventually he settled on doing his first feature on just that...small towns. The way they work, the way they feel, what they promise, how they disappoint. He realized the small town itself, as a myth and as a reality, was a good story to tell. He told it very well.

He never revealed his excitement about *Dadetown*'s success. Except once. He had a meeting with Diane Keaton just before he died. He came home beaming. "She told me that my life is about to change," he said. "What did you say?" I asked. "I said, I'll take your word for it.'" On April 28th, 1996, Russ collapsed from an aortal aneurism.

On April 29th, at the age of 27, he died, leaving our world and its films behind. It is, no doubt, his biggest regret that he can't throw another one of his own together. My comfort will be found in dedicating my creative life to him. To his friends, and I hope you agree, we have a lot of work to do.

BEN ZACKHEIM

Ben Zackheim is a friend of Russ Hexter's.

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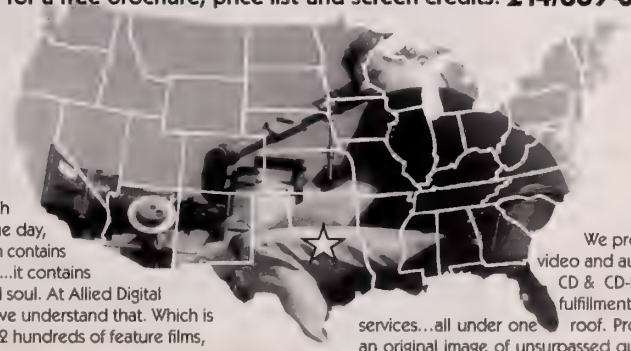
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How're We Doing? the State of the ARt

Five players analyze how experimental media is faring today

BY GEORGE FIFIELD

The funding crisis, exhibition venues, locating an audience—these are among the big issues facing experimental film- and videomakers today. The Independent invited several media artists, exhibitors, and funders to a roundtable discussion of these matters, which took place in March at the National Association of Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC) conference in Berkeley, California.
The participants were:

Steve Seid, video curator of the Pacific Film Archive at the University of California, Berkeley

Gail Silva, director of Film Arts Foundation (FAF) in San Francisco

Deborah Silverfine, director of the Electronic Media and Film Program for the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)

Valerie Soe, an experimental videomaker and writer

Scott Stark, film/video artist and webmaster of Flicker, an online experimental film and video web site (http://www.sirius.com/~sstark

***The Independent*:** A couple days ago, I was discussing this roundtable with Bob Riley, the video curator at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. I said we were going to discuss experimental media art and funding, and he replied, "There is no funding. End of discussion."

Given this climate, what advice would you give to a young art student interested in experimental media? What would you tell them about their chances of success, the audience, and what to do about funding?

Valerie Soe: If you're a student, it's actually okay, because that means you'll be graduating soon and can get $3,000 grants from FAF or $5,000 from the Pioneer Fund. But if you want to get a $10,000 or $20,000 grant from larger places, I don't see it happening anymore. ITVS is not..., well, maybe I shouldn't name names. It seems like many of the organizations that funded experimental work have been eliminated or are going more toward broadcast-type work.

IND: How about audience?

Soe: I think people want to watch stuff that's different. Speaking from the Asian-American perspective, I know that the [San Francisco International] Asian American Film [and Video] Festival has shown a lot more experimental stuff in the past five years than they showed in the first five, and that's really fun. It used to be that I felt lonesome when I started out doing experimental work. Now the kids are all outstripping me as far as doing wacky stuff.

Scott Stark: If a student was just starting out, I would say, "Don't do it for the money." You can get an occasional few-thousand-dollar grant from FAF or something like that, which is nice, but obviously it's not going to fund a major project.

Gail Silva: And only if you live in the Bay Area.

Stark: But I'm also a big believer in working with the means that you have, especially with experimental film. If all you can afford is a funky old Super 8 camera and some outdated stock, you can actually make a really interesting film. So I would say, "Don't expect very much," but if you realize what your limitations are, you can actually be very free within those limitations. That's kind of what experimental film is about for me.

IND (To Steve Seid): What would you add, from the point of view of an exhibitor?

Steve Seid: I would advise students to do two things. One is to think of themselves as media artists and not have allegiance to a specific medium, because that is so up for grabs right now that you can become an anachronism in a moment.

The other is to do what I would consider "studio work"—working at a scale that can be private and almost monastic—so that you can often do works in your house and can contain all the resources you need. Some artists now just work with the computer. They can complete a work never going outside of their own resources. That is a model—not necessarily the only model—but a model that might work well for lot of younger artists who don't have the kind of track-record to secure real funding.

Ind: How do you see the audience for experimental media today?

Seid: It's really problematic these days. That has nothing to do with funding; it has to do with the culture at large sedating people.

Ind: It doesn't have to do with funding?

Seid: Audience, no. Exhibition has a lot to do with funding. Audience is a whole other issue. For experimental work right now, we are trying to renew an audience that was very strong in the eighties that has thinned out. We are trying to figure out ways to bring in newer and younger people. To refresh the audience. I think it's becoming harder; there is too much pulling elsewhere.

IND: Debbie, I know your commitment to experimental media.

Deborah Silverfine: It is sort of a curse and a wondrous thing to be associated with one of the older funding agencies that early on recognized the importance of supporting artists. The New York State Arts Council started out first in film, with film education programs bringing art films to audiences around the state: *David and Lisa*, *The Bicycle Thief*. And somewhere back in 1965, Amos Vogel [see story p. 20] said, "You know, you really should help people make those things."

So it's sort of this wonderful claim to history that has had thirty-something years to evolve and a lot of bumps along the way. NYSCA does actually still fund experimental work, its exhibition, its distribution, and its production, [though] at much lower levels than we did in the past.

It's different in that the artists themselves differently identify the types of projects they are doing. There is no longer a community that's involved in a more narrowly defined set of formal issues. People are defining experimentation in so many different ways. That is what's keeping it alive and interesting. It is a low moment for formalistic aesthetic issues, [but] a lot of those practices have found their way into documentary, narrative, and mixed genre work.

> I'm a big believer in working with the means that you have. If all you can afford is a funky old Super 8 camera and some outdated stock, you can actually make a really interesting film.
>
> —Scott Stark



Roundtable participants, from left: Valerie Soe, Scott Stark, Steve Seid, Deborah Silverfine, and Gail Silva.
Photo: George Fifield

We are at a moment when the terms and meanings are shifting. In New York we have a Gay and Lesbian Experimental Festival. That's about identity politics, but it is also about a range of aesthetic approaches toward making one's image. So there is a certain sort of confusion and vitality. I try not to get caught in the depressive malaise over how few places we have to go for money, and say, "Hey, it's great we can make things inexpensively, people can make work at home, and that there *are* a few funders there; they haven't all gone away."

Silva: One thing I would say [to the student] is, "Stay in school as long as you can, because at least you can use all the equipment there." A lot of these schools have programs where Kodak or other product manufacturers are giving tape and film to the schools so students can learn on their products. See how long you can make this whole access thing last.

I also would agree about scale. Film Arts Foundation started a small grants program in 1984 because of an experience I'd had that really opened my eyes. It was when the National Endowment for the Arts regional fellowship programs were still in existence and I had gone to be on a first-tier review panel of the then NEA Western States Regional Fellowship Program [for the 13 Western states and territories] at the Rocky Mountain Film Center. I was stunned by the number of applications from the Bay Area. I thought, "My goodness, there are a lot of people trying to get money, and there is a limited amount of money." So we designed a program and raised money for Bay Area media artists. Knowing we couldn't raise a lot, we tried to think of the ways in which a small amount of money would make a difference, and that was development, that first amount of money for a project. So we give very small development grants, $3,000 or so. Most of our grants go to short experimental works in film and video.

IND: Exhibition spaces and media arts centers are folding around the country. Are new ones popping up to take their place? Is it possible that this is even healthy, that it helps to create new aesthetics?

Stark: That's a good point. In San Francisco there is a place called Total Mobile Homes. They have no funding that I know of. They were

started by this woman and her friend in the basement of her apartment building, and it seats like twenty people. It's a real underground, grassroots kind of place. It doesn't have much expectation for being this institution or anything, and it's a very informal, intimate place to show films. It's very nice that way.

Seid: They call themselves a micro-cinema.

Silverfine: I think we have had those types of organizations all through our golden years, and they are vital at any moment to new groups of artists coming together. In New York City, it used to be hard for me to defend. It's [only] a bar sometimes. But there would be a real constituency there creating work.

We do need to find a way to sustain [these] institutions. It's becoming increasingly difficult, and the ones that seem to be doing better have gone on a sort of mixed mission. It also means that we have several parallel audiences, and that's a tricky thing. How many nights of very low attendance can you carry to keep it alive for that community? You've got to start coming up with very creative ways to mix it up again beyond doing themed programming.

> The general cultural climate is not saying, "Go out, discover new things, pursue new ideas." It's saying, "Cocoon."
> —Steve Seid

Soe: The thing that seems to help [venues] like the [San Francisco] Cinematheque, is that the Cinematheque can get press on something and then you can't get a seat. A lot of it has to do with whether you can get any press at all in the daily newspapers or even the big so-called fringe papers like the *Bay Guardian* or the *San Francisco Weekly*. If you get something in there, then you get people [to come out.] It's like it doesn't make any difference what else you do, like sending out a calendar. Somehow the press legitimizes experimental work. And then you can't get in to see Leslie Thornton, when she was here recently.

Seid: I find that serendipitous though.

Soe: Totally!

Seid: You become completely prey to the vagaries of some journalist who decides he likes this program over that program, and often they mine it for any kind of exploitative thing they can find.

I would never turn down press and am willing to grovel for press. But at the same time it becomes such a strong link in this whole process and kind of pathetic.

IND: Thinking in terms of smaller exhibition spaces, they tend to be artist-organized, artist-run, wanting to have some other point of view. Will this affect the future of exhibition?

Soe: I was thinking about your previous question. It's good to have these small spaces or things in bars and so forth, but a lot of these spaces are so dependent on people putting in so many volunteer hours and so much of their lives and their energy that, once they burn out, a lot of these places go away.

The same thing for me is why do artists always have to be starving? Why do they always have to be the ones who sacrifice their off-hours after working temp jobs for forty hours a week and then have to go put together a film festival or a cinematheque? Maybe I'm getting old, but I am getting tired of everybody I know burning out on these little teeny places. They are putting their lives in them and everyone goes, "Oh, that's so sad." That was my gripe about the last question.

IND: It's a good gripe.

Silverfine: It's one that is really at the heart of value of art and cultural product and how it has shifted.

IND (to Stark): You run one of the best Web sites on the subject of experimental media. How do you see the future for experimental media and changing technologies?

Stark: Well, I am starting to see the potential of the Internet for creating a community that wasn't there before—bringing people out of these remote areas of this country and other places around the world who are off doing their own little underground film and video thing, and their suddenly seeing a whole bunch of people doing the same thing in some other area of the universe. That's very exciting for them. They can also look at each other's work and get ideas and exchange tapes.

Then there are also people who are working specifically within electronic media. Film's probably going to be a dead medium maybe twenty or thirty years from now. Digital technology is going to take over and surpass it. Those of us who have had allegiance to film are going to think about why we are still doing it—*if* we can still afford to do it, as the price is going to go up as the materials become scarcer. At that point, are we going to start working with Web sites or CD-ROMs or whatever else is going to evolve, and still be able to work with our ideas in that form.

IND: Steven Vitiello of Electronic Arts Intermix said an amazing thing the other day. He has just completed work on a Web site with Nam June Paik for the Swatch Watch company, and in its first month it has received a million hits. He added that if EAI could rent a million Nam June Paik tapes, that would take care of their whole budget for a long time. Is that kind of audience going to change things?

Stark: Well, the Flicker Web site doesn't have that kind of audience [laughter]. And maybe hits aren't really hits either; it could mean a lot of things. You don't really know who is logging on, what they are actually doing, and what they're getting out of it. Probably two to ten percent are actually intrigued by the work.

IND: Has this kind of digital experimental work been even discussed at a funding level?

Silverfine: It's interesting; experimental artists have been there for about ten years. Laurie Anderson moved pretty seamlessly from video to CD-ROM. David Blair took [his movie] *Wax* online.

Funders are slowly getting interested in it. Unfortunately, a lot of

the computer applications are not so much about making art. You almost have to say they're about community development or community networking. That's a real problem, because we should be able to stand up and say, "We make art." Right now we are open at NYSCA to getting applications in our Electronic Media category for CD-ROM projects. The thing is, they are often not as strong; the people who are applying often don't write as many grant proposals. They come out of the art schools where they have lots of equipment and have-n't had to write the competitive proposals.

Seid: One of the problems with the Web right now is that even though there are some interesting works being put out there, they're charitable donations to the Web right now. Artists like Zoe Beloff or David Blair put things out there, but there is no compensation.

> Stay in school as long as you can, because at least you can use all the equipment there.
> —Gail Silva

Silverfine: That is an excellent point. Increasingly, with the promise of 500 or 1500 channels and [programmers saying], "We're going to need you 'content providers' to give us work," I'm starting to think that we have to find a way to give artists money to produce the work up front, because it's not going to come out of distribution. Or else we are going to need revenue to put the work into distribution formats, so it can reach an audience.

It's not all that bad. Experimental Television Center, which was one of the early centers for experimentation with video, gives out these small funds, these finishing grants, and they're very much open to multimedia. In this convergence moment, they got very brave and opened up their grants to filmmakers as well as video artists (laughter), and people working with new technology. We all should be thinking about who are the story tellers? Who are the moving-image makers? And declare that larger territory for our enterprise.

Ind: Gail, what do you see as the future of experimental media in terms of grants and exhibition?

Silva: An interesting thing happened in just the last week. I had some people call me and want to make individual donations out of the blue. We have never had individual donors. I'm trying to figure out, is it a reaction to the funding climate or how people feel about what's going on in Washington? I'd like to believe that as the money shrinks, as government support shrinks, as our freedom of expression is attacked, an aggressive, righteous group of people may come forth to help in some ways.

As far as exhibition goes, the problem there is not only the shrinking audiences, it is also a lack of funding for anybody to do exhibitions. Film Arts Foundation is an organization that does many different things, and the most difficult thing to raise money for is our exhibition program. It does not support itself. We believe in paying artists. We also have a film festival that pays rentals to artists whose work is selected, and it is more and more difficult every year. We are now trying to do different sorts of funding things, like going to corporations. We are becoming a little more successful, but there is no way we can do exhibition and cover it. It's got to be the other parts of the organization that are covering it. It's other earned income. At this moment, it is not even grant income.

Seid: Traditionally at Pacific Film Archive there are several nights that are experimental film, and they have been subsidized by the other evenings. The big international features somehow have much greater support. In fact, those evenings are weakening also. I don't think it is simply an aud-ience for experimental film that is declining, but the general audience. A kind of intellectual curiosity is being suppressed at some level. The general cultural climate is not saying, "Go out, discover new things, pursue new ideas." It's saying, "Cocoon."

Silva: That's cause they're all on the Web [laughter].

Silverfine: Maybe we could speak about more established artists. Thank god a number of important experimental artists got tenure when such a thing existed, to guarantee a space for their work and because they are providing an aesthetic and philosophical framework for some younger people. I have to say I am sorry to see more accomplished artists giving up on the few existing public and private funding arenas; they don't even bother to ask for money. It's admitting defeat.

Seid: To be honest, there are also a lot of very accomplished artists who don't seem fundable anymore because they are working in arenas that are not being supported at the grant level. A Bill Viola or anyone else doing very formal work would probably feel they would be overlooked because of subject matter and possibly simply because of their success. Probably the biggest burden that ever happened to Viola was getting the genius award from MacArthur. I was on panels after that and they went, "What does he need a grant for?"

Ind: Valerie, would you like to discuss established artists and their role in this?

Soe: Jesus.

Seid: You're an established artist.

Soe: Oh god, I never thought of myself that way. It's embarrassing. Start with Scott.

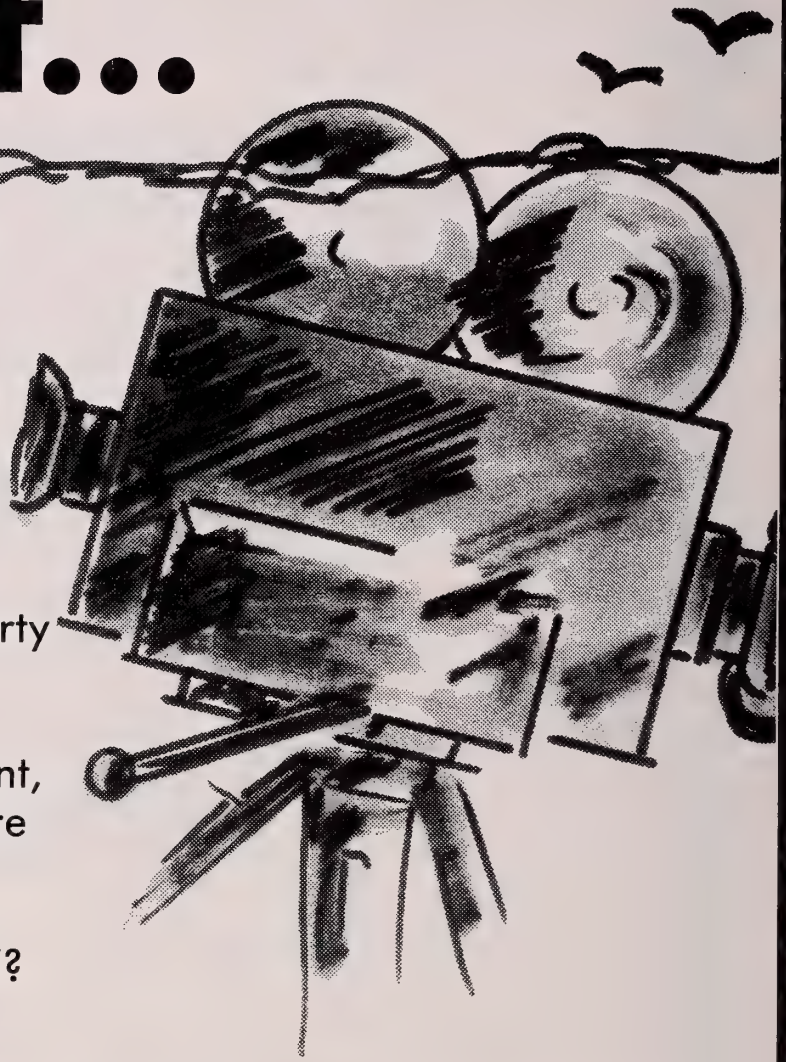
Stark: It seems like the definition of established artists has changed. I'm not sure what one is. If we consider ourselves established artists...

Soe: We're survivors.

Stark: I have a forty-hour job, and then I come home and try to do work on the weekends. I just add my input into the community in any way I have the energy for, which sometimes is not very much—working on the Web site, going to shows, or helping support other people's work.

Continued on p. 60

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SILVER LINING

One Foundation That's Still Committed to Experimental Media

BY SCOTT BRIGGS

WHILE A LOT OF MEDIA ARTS FUNDing sources are being eroded by today's prevailing political tides, the St. Paul, Minnesota-based Jerome Foundation stands firm in its support for experimental film and video, buttressed by the original ideals of its founder.

The Jerome Foundation was created in 1964 as the Avon Foundation by renowned painter, composer, and filmmaker Jerome Hill. Hill's own film work included documentaries, animated shorts, and unconventional features such as *The Sand Castle*, which included stop-motion animation and dream sequences inspired by the ideas of Carl Jung. Hill often supported progressive artistic and humanistic causes. After his death in 1972, his commitment continued through his foundation, which was renamed after him in 1973.

Today the Jerome Foundation provides grants to artists in a variety of disciplines, including video and film. Funding is available to artists living in Minnesota (Hill's birthplace) and New York City, where he lived during much of his career.

Currently the Jerome media arts programs account for about 12.5 percent of the foundation's annual grants. Of the $2.15 million awarded during its last fiscal year, which ended May 1, more than $270,000 went toward film and video production. The vast majority of that—more than $236,000—was given to individual artists.

The Jerome Foundation's financial commitment shows no sign of waning any time soon. The organization's $60 million endowment, drawn from Jerome Hill's estate, is invested. A portion of the returns is given away every year. Foundation president Cynthia Gehrig says the books are healthy, and expects this year's overall funding level to increase slightly over that of FY1995/96.

Potential mass appeal is not a priority for the Jerome Foundation.

Equally stable is the foundation's commitment to experimental media. Although Jerome programs do fund some narrative and documentary projects, the majority of its film and video grants go toward pieces that eschew traditional production styles and storytelling techniques. The Jerome Foundation's emphasis on experimental work comes fairly naturally, says Gehrig, since the organization is dedicated to supporting new or emerging artists—often the type to challenge conventional methods of creative expression. Also, she explains, the foundation is set up to fund fairly low-budget projects. Awards generally range from $6,000 to $15,000, going toward pieces that won't cost more than $75,000 overall.

"Experimental works tend to be less expensive," says Gehrig. "People who haven't made that many films are more likely to make shorter, less expensive works as they're building their repertoire or their career."

The Jerome Foundation's continued support of provocative work can also be credited to its board of directors, which is mostly composed of practicing artists and representatives from artistic organizations. Tom Borrup, executive director of Intermedia Arts, Minnesota, has sat on the Jerome Foundation board for two years. He believes the organization is crucial now, not only because other arts funding sources are shrinking, but also to respond to the needs of a changing society.

"The world is shrinking rapidly," Borrup says. "Boundaries between nations, racial and ethnic groups, and economic classes are getting really mixed up because of communications technology and rapid modes of transportation. It's a more complex, dynamic, tension-filled world. This kind of creative endeavor that brings into question old ways of doing things [and] old boundaries between cultures really drives that engine of human progress."

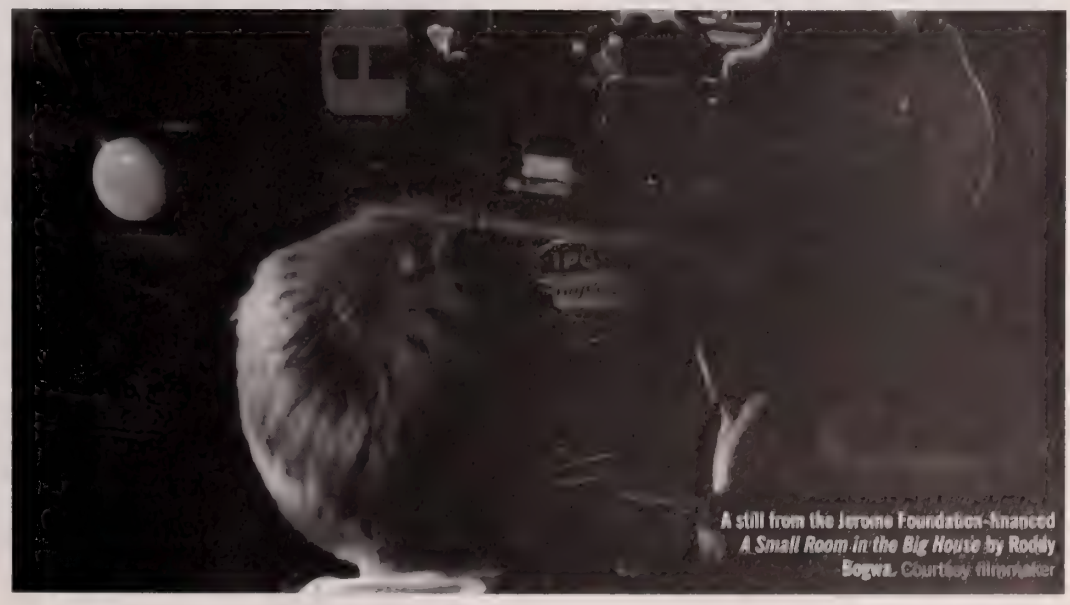
The Jerome Foundation's financial commitment shows no sign of waning any time soon.

Some Jerome-funded works have received widespread exposure, including Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*, Tom Kalin's *Swoon*, and Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning*. Films such as these, however, are exceptions to the rule. Potential mass appeal is not a priority for the Jerome Foundation, which has also put money behind works by Jo Andres, Emily Breer, Beth B., Roddy Bogawa, Kathy High, Jack Walsh, Lewis Klahr, Leslie Thornton, Alan Berliner, and Shu Lea Cheang, among others.

"We care about audiences, but we don't make decisions on grants based upon audience appeal or size of audience," stresses Gehrig. "We're interested in supporting the creative act."

Jerome Hill couldn't have said it better himself.

Scott Briggs is an independent journalist and video producer in Minneapolis.



A still from the Jerome Foundation-financed *A Small Room in the Big House* by Roddy Bogawa. Courtesy filmmaker

eX ask Amos

Cinema 16 founder Amos Vogel discusses how to cultivate experimental audiences today

BY SCOTT MACDONALD

AMOS VOGEL WAS DIRECTOR OF NEW YORK'S CINEMA 16, WHICH HE cofounded with Marcia Vogel. It was the longest-lived (1947-1963) and most successful film society in American history (at its height, Cinema 16 boasted 7,000 members and inspired a nationwide network of smaller film societies) and the first American organization to specialize in the distribution of avant-garde film. The following is an excerpt from Scott MacDonald's *Critical Cinema 3*, due out in early 1997 (Univ. of California Press).

MacDonald: When you ran Cinema 16, the film society model was the most standard way of presenting alternative film. During the sixties there was a movement or at least the illusion of one. Then in the seventies came government support for venues for alternative cinema. I'm wondering how you see the alternative film scene at this point.

Vogel: To begin with, you always have to look at the overall social scene, because the avant-garde film only exists embedded within the larger scene. When we were showing films at Cinema 16, our activities coincided, roughly, with the period of the Beats, which eventually developed into the movement of the sixties. Of course, we started in 1947-1948, before the Beat era, but the very fact that films like *Pull My Daisy* [1959] were premiered at Cinema 16 shows that there was an atmosphere beyond Cinema 16 that began to be friendly towards the kinds of experimentation we were concerned with. It's true that by virtue of showing such films at Cinema 16 we helped to prepare the groundwork for such a situation. It didn't fall from heaven. But there was a larger social situation that allowed us to develop and be successful.

I don't find this to be true today, or even in recent years. We're in an extremely retrograde and retrogressive atmosphere at the moment—politically, culturally, in every respect—which has very serious consequences for cinema, and certainly for avant-garde cinema, since it's more oppositional than some of the other independent cinemas around.

At the moment, there's a very tiny audience for avant-garde film, even in an urban center like New York, and there are very few places to see avant-garde film. But you have to be careful not to generalize too much. When I started, there were no such showings in New York, but when I did start, almost immediately I found a lot of people who were anxious to see such material.

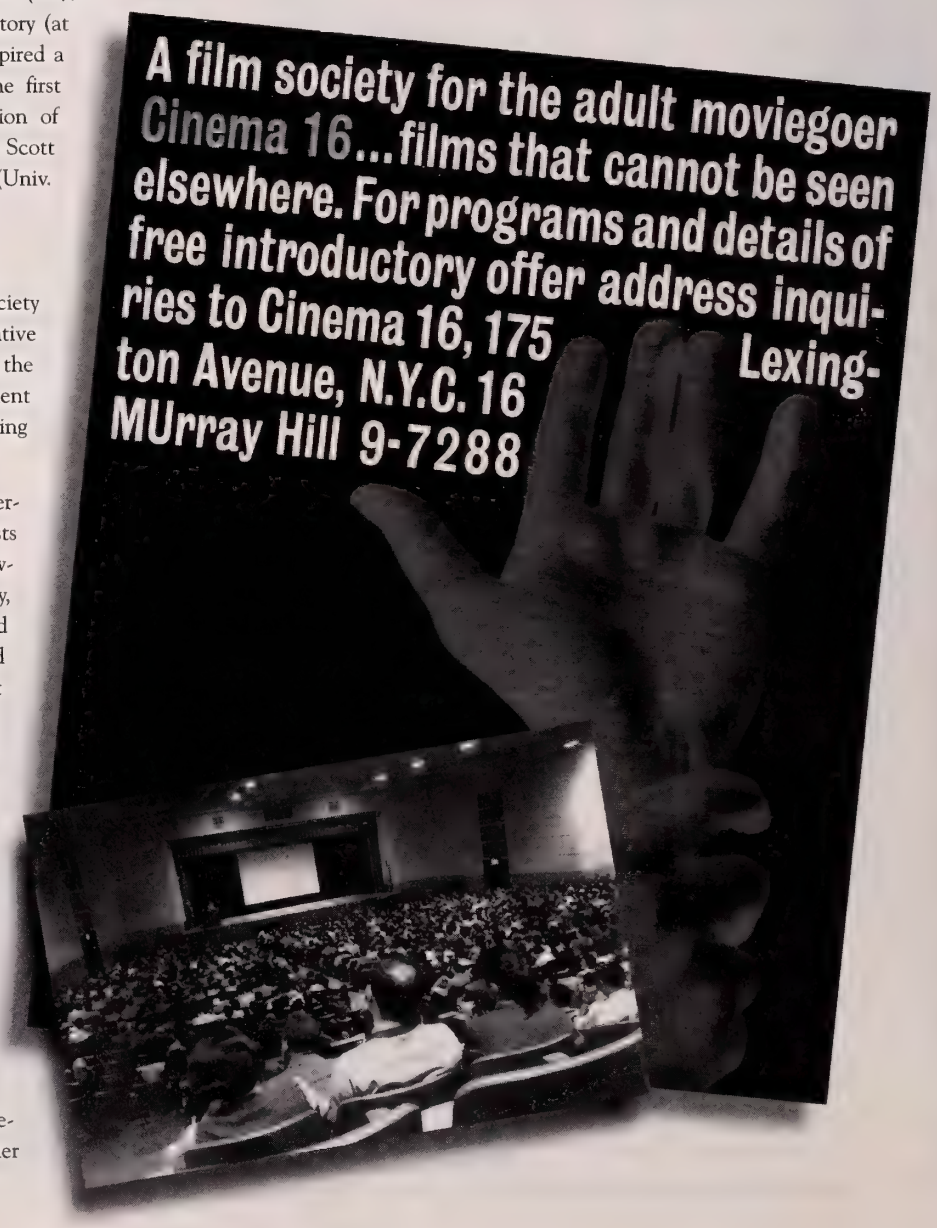
The point is that it would be a mistake to say, "Well, hardly anybody is interested in this kind of film nowadays, period." That's not the case. I can see various things that could be done.

MacDonald: Like what?

Vogel: It's very possible for me to sound old-fashioned, particularly as I get older, but I've done a great deal of thinking as to what could be done with avant-garde cinema at the present time to get it more widely seen, and the solutions I come up with aren't all that new. There were certain things done at the time of Cinema 16 that are simply not being done now. The first thing would be to try these things again and see what emerges.

MacDonald: Can you be specific?

Vogel: In terms of programming, the Cinema 16 formula, in my opinion, could be used successfully now. When I say "successful," I mean it would



be more successful than the formulae used now, which consists very simply of two options: number one, you put together a number of avant-garde films by various filmmakers; or number two, you show the work of one avant-garde filmmaker. At Cinema 16 there was an eclectic *mix* of documentaries, scientific films, more conventional narrative shorts, animations, and avant-garde films.

Don't get me wrong, I believe there *also* ought to be separate series where you concentrate on the work of particular avant-garde filmmakers. That's something I didn't do at Cinema 16, though I remember thinking of it frequently. But always I came to the conclusion that given my own personal resources, I just couldn't bring it off in addition to what I was already doing.

If we had said to the Cinema 16 audience, we're now going to present an entire program to you of one avant-garde filmmaker (whoever that might be: Oskar Fischinger, Michael Snow . . .), and if I had done this again and again over the course of a year, I would have lost my membership. It was and is difficult for me to sit through an entire program of avant-garde film—and I *love* avant-garde film. Why would it be different for those who have not developed a strong interest in such work?

There's another very mundane-sounding issue. I'm firmly convinced that whatever kind of programming you do, it must have a very strong publicity component, a publicist and a promotional set-up that reaches out into the general population. Programmers must insist on adequate publicity, even if it means making a pest of yourself at the newspapers. Believe me, I know how difficult this is. I'm not utopian. But I'm also convinced that this is not being done adequately now.

At Cinema 16, we had very attractive and expensive brochures, with a lot of information, and these were very widely available. We printed very large runs of these brochures.

MacDonald: How large?

Vogel: Maybe a hundred thousand.

MacDonald: Really? A hundred thousand!

Vogel: Of course! It was *only* out of that that we got the attendance we did.

MacDonald: What did you do with these brochures?

Vogel: Mailed them—it was very expensive. The one great privilege we had was that we were able to work with first-rate, commercial art directors, who designed the brochures with me. If we'd sent out ten thousand brochures, the membership would have been five hundred. All these promotional efforts—unfortunately—are absolutely necessary.

Another very essential point. What is the avant-garde? Who is the avant-garde? I think there was an interesting conceptual error made by the New American Cinema Group in the early sixties: namely, they excluded the commercial avant-garde. There was even a question raised as to whether these people *were* avant-garde. From the very beginning I had always included in my own definition of "avant-garde" people like Antonioni, Bresson, and the early Bertolucci. Oshima. Fassbinder. You could go on and on.

It's a very serious error to exclude these people. I'm against commercialism as much as the next person, but at the same time, you have to realize that there are people trying to find new styles, approaches, content, even in the commercial arena, and they cannot be eliminated. Sometimes their achievements—in terms of experimentation—are as important, if not more important, than those of the strictly noncommercial "experimental filmmakers" you and I love.



Left: Cinema 16's audiences numbered in the hundreds (inset); promotional material that helped bring in the crowds. Above, Vogel and avant-garde filmmakers in Berlin (circa 1960) for an event organized by Cinema 16 and the Literarisches Colloquium. From left: Stan Brakhage, Bruce Conner, Carmen D'Avino, Shirley Clarke, Stan Vanderbeek (sitting), Walter Hoellerer (of the Literarisches Colloquium), Vogel, and Ed Emshiller.
Courtesy Scott MacDonald

Another controversial point, at least for some people: video. As a programmer, am I supposed to say to people who only want to work in video, "I will not show your work because it's not 'pure cinema' "? I don't even know what "pure cinema" means. If you want to build audiences, you have to include the best video work, which can range from advanced avant-garde work to wonderful documentaries to music videos.

If I ran a Cinema 16 now, I would show the works of such people, along with all the other kinds of "experiment." Certainly this would attract more of an audience.

Scott MacDonald has authored three volumes of Critical Cinema.

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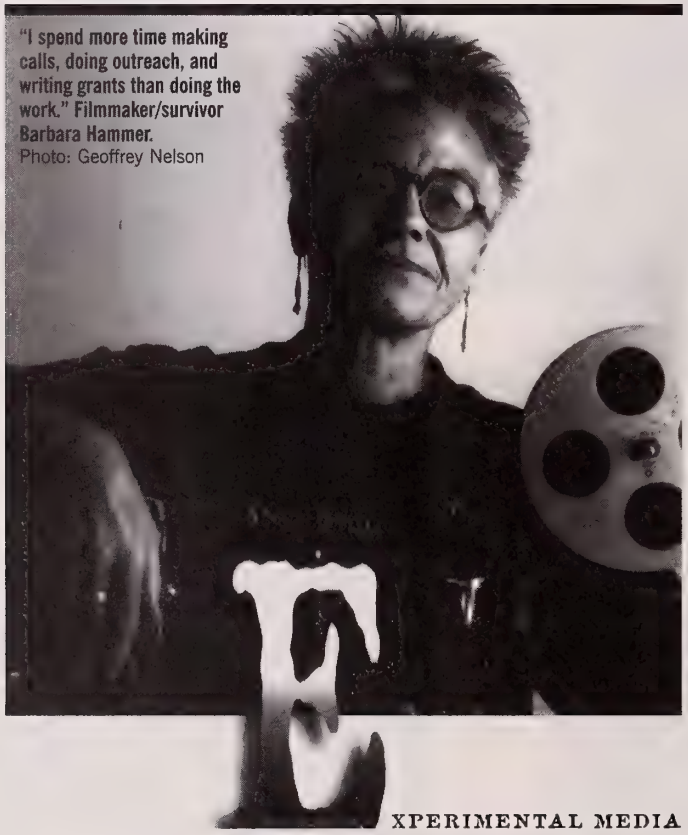
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eXPERIMENTS IN LONGEVITY

Experimental artists come and go, but a few hardy souls remain dedicated decade after decade. CHRISTINE MACDONALD discusses survival skills with a few of the fittest.



"I spend more time making calls, doing outreach, and writing grants than doing the work." Filmmaker/survivor Barbara Hammer.
Photo: Geoffrey Nelson

EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA ARTISTS HAVE LONG BEEN VIEWED AS THE ART WORLD'S high-wire acts for their ability to produce on a shoestring. However, today's Draconian cuts in arts funding leave many feeling like they're performing without a net. These film and video artists say they endure by devoting as much creativity to survival strategies as they pour into their work.

"You simply have to put together your production budget and then you make a piece or two," says Woody Vasulka, cofounder of the alternative arts space The Kitchen and one of the video artists in the vanguard during the late 1960s and 1970s. These pioneers emerged during an era when lines blurred between art and grassroots activism, and public art received a lot of attention and funding.

"We were a generation of activists. We took art out of the museums and galleries and [and put it] into parks and public spaces. In its very practice, art became democratized," Vasulka reminisces. "Now everybody wants to make money. I come from a different world where art was sort of a spiritual thing."

While the public art infrastructure has been largely dismantled in recent years, veteran producers retain much of the commitment and energy that fuels their work. Vasulka and his wife, video artist Steina Vasulka, support themselves and their work through an ever-changing roster of exhibitions, commissions, occasional grants, and speaking engagements.

Other producers take full-time university positions, exchanging time for the security of regular pay checks and health insurance. Visiting professor jobs, grant money, public television support, and ties to European institutions also sustain artists. While the basic strategies are similar, these established film- and videomakers have developed very personal approaches to artistic survival.

Have art, will travel

"In the 1980s we went into self-support. It's kind of dubious, because you have to work more in order to work," says Woody Vasulka. "We have to travel a lot. It becomes a burden. But we can live in this paradise," he says of the couple's home in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Video artist Dara Birnbaum also travels internationally to show work and give lectures. Having worked as a video artist for two decades, she has cleared one hurdle—she now has international name recognition and an ability to exhibit at museums and other high-profile sites. Birnbaum's next project, an interactive video installation



Like a number of veteran experimental makers, Daniel Reeves is now creating some of his strongest work to date, such as his recent *Obsessive Becoming*, for which he had to look as far as Scotland for funding.

entitled *Four Gates*, will adorn a government building in Austria.

But Birnbaum's art world recognition has not erased money troubles. Once she had three assistants in her New York studio; today, she has one. "Last year, I had the worst money crisis in ten years," she says.

Lesbian media artist Barbara Hammer also has an independent lifestyle. "I make more money from stipends and honorariums than from teaching," says Hammer, whose feature documentary *Tender Fictions* is currently on the international festival circuit. She stresses the importance of asking to be paid rental, workshop and speaking fees, and laments the time and energy she expends to keep going.

"I'm exhausted," says Hammer. "To survive today, I am a secretary to myself. I spend more time making calls, doing outreach and writing grants than doing the work."

The University Route

A few years ago, filmmaker James Benning traded in an artist's life in New York City for a warmer climate and a teaching position at California Institute of the Arts. "In the late eighties, I could see the changes coming," he says.

Even with the security of a paycheck, Benning says raising money is hard. "I can keep working because I make films quite cheaply," says Benning. "But I can't make as many." The funding crunch means it takes him twice as long, about four years, to produce each of his films. "It's not fun living like a student all your life," laments the university professor.

For video artist Martha Rosler, a professor at Rutgers University, time is also an issue. She says that juggling academic demands and an art career is increasingly difficult. "Since I teach full time, it's very hard to control where my work is shown," Rosler says, who relies on several distributors.

With little time to manage her career, apply for grants, or plan production budgets, Rosler rations her time as tightly as her production costs. Her strategy is simple: "I blindly grab my camera when I see something in which I'm interested. Once I have a rough cut, I think about how much money I'm going to need to make it look the way I want," she says. Troubled by the undercapitalization of media centers that offer cheap editing time and pressed by a crowded schedule, she has a backlog of five projects awaiting completion.

Video portraitist Joan Logue spent last year as a visiting professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and says she looks to her teaching posts as an "umbrella" to shelter her artistic ventures and to offer "inspiration that allows you to question yourself."

Logue also worked with MIT graduate students to build a *Living Portrait Gallery*, Web pages that contain a few seconds from her video portraits and her *30 Second Spots*, spoofs on advertising that promote the likes of Nam June Paik, Joan Jonas, and Phillip Glass. "It will offer me a chance to show the work myself," Logue says, rather than rely on a gallery or museum space.

Continental Connections

Teaching and exhibitions bring Logue frequently to Europe, where she will return next fall to teach Bosnian young people to make video journals. She and other experimental artists say they find more support and receptive audiences overseas and cultivate ties with Europe's art and academic worlds.

Daniel Reeves received partial funding for his 1995 video *Obsessive Becoming* from the Scottish Arts Council and Channel Four in London. Channel Four also signed on for his next project, *Forty-nine*

Bodhisattvas. "There is a smaller pie here, but there is more intimacy," says Reeves, lives part of the year there with his Scottish wife.

Grant money shrinks...

While grant money is scarce today, some artists say private foundations and public cultural organizations remain crucial supporters. Yvonne Rainer relied on such channels to produce her latest film, *MURDER and murder*, set for release next fall. "I'm one of the privileged few in the funding loop," says Rainer, who also teaches workshops and does speaking engagements.


Dara Birnbaum's "Trans[illegible]sion Tower: Sentinel."
Photo courtesy videomaker

However, grant funding is hardly a panacea. "It's not easy to cobble together a $200,000 feature film from a bunch of $10,000 grants," she says.

Rainer had no luck finding a producer for her latest film, which deals with breast cancer, has a lesbian protagonist, and includes what Rainer calls "funny business" with the narrative structure. Even lesbian producers shied away from the work, which Rainer says is "off-putting" as a matter of choice. While Rainer says she is pessimistic about making another feature, she has not considered changing her style. "My sensibilities do not lie in commercial films," she says.

With grant money scarcer, Edin Velez says he's working on his strategy. Literacy in a variety of formats and mediums helps, and Velez's career is at a crossroads between the art and broadcast worlds. "I like moving back and forth between aesthetics," says the artist, who works in film, video and other media.

Velez's 1995 short film *Memory of Fire* received production funds from the Independent Television Service, another sometimes supporter of experimental work. However, narrowing opportunities mean paying the rent is not getting easier. "I almost have to put blinders on to concentrate on work," says Velez.

...and self-sufficiency expands

Kira Perov, who has handled the business side of husband Bill Viola's work since the late 1970s, says the well-known installation artist has sought surer funding in recent years.

"People have families at this stage. You can't afford to wait around for a $20,000 grant that may come your way in six months," Perov says.

Viola is one of the few video artists devoted full-time to his installation work; he employs two assistants and occasionally an engineer. Perov, who also has an assistant, says they support the operation through museum commissions and the slow sale of installation pieces through Antony d'Offay Gallery in London. "We try to make it foolproof and easy for institutions and curators who may be techno-phobic," Perov says.

Despite Viola's well-oiled apparatus and track record, Perov says raising money is a struggle. It took the Museum of Modern Art nearly three years to raise the cash for Viola's 1988 three-installation show. Perov helped curators raise funds for Viola's 1995 Venice Biennale installations.

"I would have thought that raising funds for the Biennale wouldn't be hard, but the bad press given the NEA has made it difficult," she says. Commitments with the Whitney Museum of American Art and in Europe will keep Viola and company busy for the next couple of years, but Perov and many of her colleagues say they worry about the spread of U.S. conservatism to Europe.

In addition to maintaining a studio, Viola owns a Beta-SP editing system. "If necessary, we can be totally self-sufficient," says Perov. She says the couple invests in equipment and their two kids, instead of, say, mortgage payments on a house.

Filmmakers Jeff Kreines and Joel DeMott have taken independence a step further. They are building a small black-and-white processing lab, facilitated by Kreines' side business selling movie equipment.

"I keep running into great stuff, and I think, 'Yes! If we get that piece we can do this.' And it keeps growing," says Kreines. His latest purchase is a Bosch FDL-60 Telecine with a DaVinci color corrector. The lab will make filmmaking significantly more affordable for the pair and give them complete control over the look of their films.

"Perhaps it seems a little crazy, but it makes a lot of sense," Kreines says. "If you're an artist, you need the facilities to make your art. You don't subcontract it out to others.

"We have always done everything else on our films—shooting and recording and editing through mixing and negative cutting and distribution," says Kreines. "Why not process and print them, and even do blowups, too? Why be envious of the freedom that photographers or musicians have, with their personal darkrooms or recording studios? After all, Robert Flaherty processed and printed all of *Nanook of the North* in his igloo."

Logue says she moved to inexpensive Hi-8 video and learned to tighten up her production budgets as funding dried up. "Suddenly, I realized I have to keep what I do very simple. The important thing is to keep shooting and being more creative. There's not much choice," says Logue. She keeps a notebook of more ambitious ideas she may one day produce.

Hammer has taken to hand-developing her own reversal film in her





bathroom and raves about the vibrant hues and variations the technique produces. It also allows her to shoot and print a roll in the same day. Hammer used to think of video as merely a "sketchbook" for her film work; today she often produces work using the cheaper video format.

The artists say savvy with new technologies is increasingly crucial to success. Hammer has already set up a Web site: http://www.echo.com/~lesbians. Other artists take courses or seek teaching posts where they have access and training in systems like AVID and Amiga. They're also concerned that new technologies are increasingly out of reach as the community media centers and artist collectives fold.

Basics: inspiration and hard work

While much of the media arts infrastructure pioneered by the veteran producers has been dismantled, these artists somehow seem to retain their commitment and energy. Reeves starts his day at 5:30 a.m. Birnbaum, who is recovering from mononucleosis, says she has been working for 10 years straight; she understandably fears burnout. Viola and Perov work so much they say they infrequently socialize.

Some artists spend time promoting their work, while others say they prefer to go from one production to the next. However, all seem to share a certain faith in their own serendipity.

"You work with a kind of sleight of hand, with a budget that is very optimistic," says Reeves. "You know it will take more money. But you also know that you can do it, and you just go with it."

Benning has begun a new film on ancient Native American cliff dwellers, but says modern-day funding is baffling. "My only strategy is to go slow, save some money and buy film stock," he says. "I don't know where to look [for funding] anymore. I'm going to have to use my own money and ask doctors and lawyers. I don't even know how to go about it."

Yvonne Rainer says that when it comes to coping with funding, staying absorbed by the creative process is essential. "You take each step one at a time. You can't strategize two years in advance," say Rainer. "I knew there was a possibility that I was going to get it (*MURDER and murder*) edited and run out of money." As she began editing this spring, she received a $35,000 Rockefeller grant that will pay for finishing the film.



However, the high points provide only a little insulation against the perennial difficulties, the artists say. On Rainer's current project, she found it infinitely demoralizing to recruit a production team from newcomers who had never seen her movies.

"There I was, a 60-year-old director applying for a job with a 25-year-old who had never heard of me," she recalls. While Rainer was actually doing the hiring, she says it didn't feel that way. "Every five years the whole scene changes and you have to start from ground zero."

Finally, the good news

Not all the news is bad. Electronic Arts Intermix has posted three years of record-breaking sales. "Video is no longer a thing kept in the back room with the volume low," says EAI's Stephen Vitiello.

While video art continues to be a difficult sell, a few artists have gallery representation. Sales are mostly to museums. However, Birnbaum recently sold an installation to a couple of San Francisco collectors who display it in their home.



Clockwise from top: A still from James Benning's film *Deseret*; Edin Velez, maker of *Memories of Fire*; and a shot from Bill Viola's video, *The Passing*. All photos courtesy of mediamakers

Logue's video portraits remain ahead of their time. She says MIT architects are designing "smart walls" that someday will make "living portraits" part of every home. "I'm working for the future when video portraits can run on a wall 24-hours-a-day," says Logue. Her next portrait, of choreographer Merce Cunningham, hangs at Lincoln Center this summer.

Also coming this summer from Video Data Bank is *Surveying the First Decade*, a series containing 17 hours of early video work curated by Chris Hill. "The package contains a good look at the first decade and all its different agendas," says Video Data Bank executive director Kate Horsfield. The series also saved videos on the verge of disintegration, another serious problem facing veteran producers.

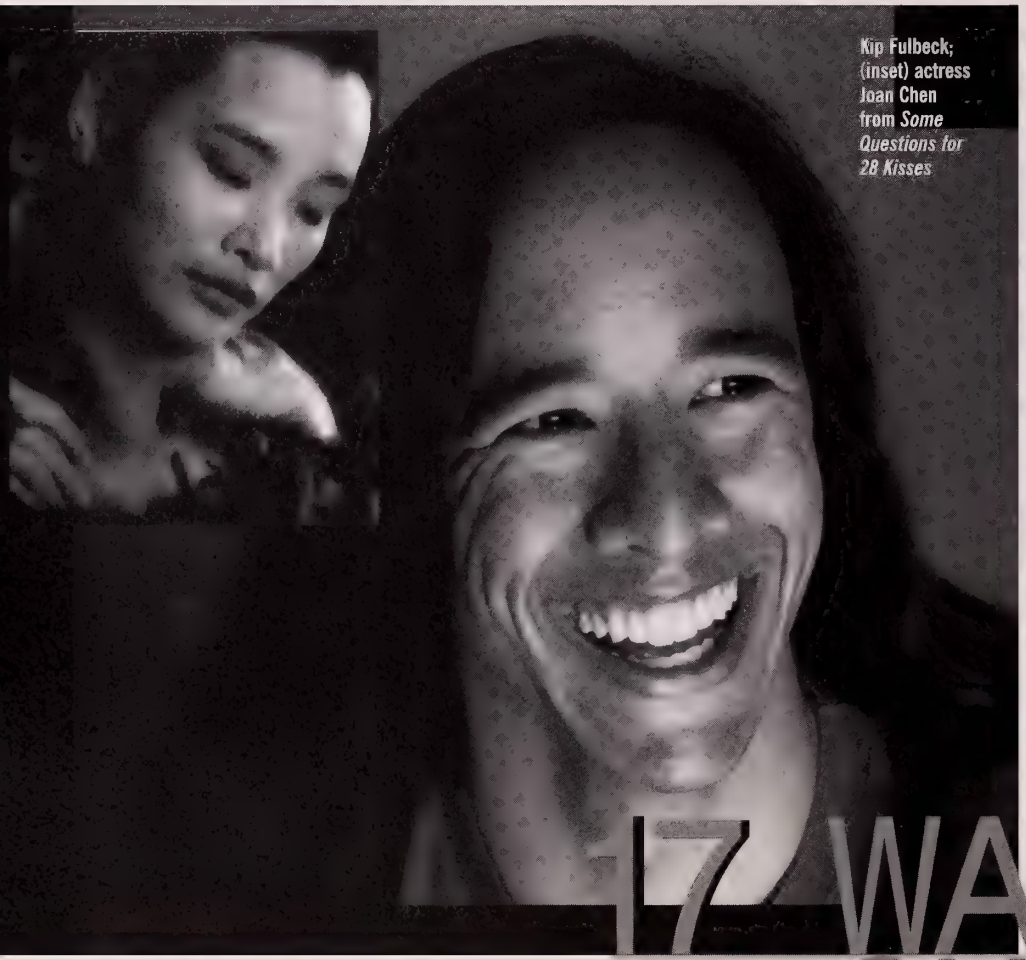
Some artists say they consider trading in years working on the edge for more lucrative ventures. Velez and Reeves are toying with independent feature film projects. Rainer says she may write a play. Others, including a philosophical Vasulka, cannot imagine doing anything else. "This is a lifestyle proven over the centuries," he says, putting his struggles as an artist in a historical perspective.

Christine MacDonald is a freelance journalist based in Boston.

eX

Experimental art is more than alive and well. There's an extraordinary number of artists who persistently push the boundaries of 16mm, Super 8, 3/4" video, Hi8, and their multiple hybrids. Then there's the interactive and new media technologies that lure experimental makers to work with Web sites, CD-ROMs and interactive installations.

In this roundup, THE INDEPENDENT profiles a pantheon of artists who are among the fresh faces or undersung talents in experimental media today.



Kip Fulbeck; (inset) actress Joan Chen from *Some Questions for 28 Kisses*

17 WAYS TO CUTTING

Kip Fulbeck

video humorist

Kip Fulbeck, 31, is one of those rare artists who is at home confronting the personal and the political, and who can address racial stereotypes with the same levity he brings to his relationship with his grandmother.

"Humor is the shield," says the Santa Barbara, California-based video artist. "Who wants to listen to me get up on a soap box? Things like humor, seduction, a certain amount of charm—they're techniques that allow access."

Fulbeck's videos, which last year alone appeared in more than two dozen festivals and exhibitions, include *Banana Split*, 25 anecdotes about Fulbeck's experience growing up as an Amerasian, as well as *Some Questions for 28 Kisses* and *Asian Studs Nightmare*, on interracial dating.

"Sometimes when you're doing 'minority work,' people want to put you in a box, and some people like to be in that box," he says. "But everything is not rosy in Oz. It's wrong to shy away from the political. Too often experimental work gets put by the wayside because many festivals are afraid of controversy."

Although Fulbeck professes a weakness in constructing classic Hollywood-style narratives, his high-energy voiceovers prove him to be a compelling storyteller in his own right.

–MARY ANN CAMINERO

Jean Donohue & Fred Johnson

landscape poets

With their Covington, Kentucky, offices located on the Ohio River and Cincinnati looming just across the bridge, it is fitting that Jean Donohue and Fred Johnson's latest project is called *Sipiwi*, an ancient Native American word for "people who live on the other side of the river."

Better known for their traditional documentary work, this exploration of the landscape and culture of the Ohio Valley region marks a return for Donohue and Johnson to a more experimental vein.

Sipiwi, which Donohue describes as a "documentary poem," is also notable for being an experimental work that received substantial support from a public television entity, Kentucky Educational Television.

"We're bringing together different kinds of information, from highly rational sources, like maps and grids—ways people have used to control space—to mythopoetic kinds of expression, like dance and ritual," Johnson explains. The piece lyrically weaves images from the modern world with those from native prehistory: there's a performance by an Iyeska medicine woman, footage of sacred native sites (including Serpent Mound in Cincinnati, the Sacred Circle in Lexington, Kentucky, and Angel Mound in Indiana), and commentary by archeologists and environmental scientists. "We're interested in the different ways people have used, looked at, and thought about the landscape," says Johnson. –MARSHA WALKER





From Gilliam's *Sapphire and The Slave Girl*; Leah Gilliam, inset.

Leah Gilliam

cultural chameleon

Leah Gilliam, 29, came of age in the era of up-close-and-personal documentaries and video diaries. "As much as I can respect it, I don't want to do it," says the Chicago-based daughter of painter Sam Gilliam and *Washington Post* columnist Dorothy Gilliam. "I try to be subjective without being personal."

RESHARPEN THE EDGE

Four years ago, she explored identity issues in her experimental film *Now Pretend*, reclaiming *Black Like Me*, white novelist John Griffin's account of living with chemically darkened skin for six weeks. Her latest video, *Sapphire and the Slave Girl*, riffs off *Sapphire*, a 1959 English thriller flick about the murder of a Black woman who passed for white. Drawing on the pulp detective novel genre, Gilliam takes a hard-boiled look at race and gender alienation in an urban environment.

Emphasizing the complexities of identity, eight distinct characters play Sapphire. Gilliam intercuts this original footage with images from the past 40 years—educational urban planning films, Black Panther Party archival footage, news footage from the integration of Little Rock, *Sapphire*, and *Marathon Man*. Taking advantage of video technology to equalize the look of the footage, she creates a feeling of an extended historical present.

"I throw these decades up against each other to compare them, because I think very little has changed," she says. "If it sounds cynical, it's because I am."

–Meredith E. Holch

Favela

Web designers de résistance

"Favela" is the Portuguese word for the shantytowns that spring up around Brazil's metropoli. Made of cast-off materials, a favela is a poor peoples' place of resistance.

So, too, is the Favela Web site (http://www. favela.org/intro/main.html), created by Glenn Kaino, Daniel J. Martinez, Susan Otto, Greg Pederson, Rodney Ramos, and Tyson Wengler.



This multicultural group of Los Angeles-based collaborators, age 21 to 38, immerses site-seers in the kind of dizzying cultural recombinations that characterize Pacific Rim cities. Favela makes political issues look hot and gives content to slick graphics that on other sites are only hot air. It's intelligent politics for the MTV generation.

A magazine of cultural production, the premiere issue of the site includes visual art by May Sun, Francisco Siquieros, Edgar Heap of Birds, and others, as well as a Quicktime release of an independent film suspended from distribution by a lawsuit; poetry by Roberto Bedoya and architectural theory by Lebbeus Woods; and music by hip-hop deejay Qbert. In the spirit of collectivity, the designers choose not to divulge their own individual contributions to the site.

Kaino notes that most commercial Web sites exclude poor and non-white people: "We understand who owns and runs the Internet. Our site's existence is politicized by what's around it."

–Laura U. Marks

Vidie Lange

media meditations

"Numbers have a kind of metaphorical meaning to me," says Vidie Lange, creator of *Mississippi Lotus*, a spiritual-ecological installation now at the University of Colorado's Andrew Mackey Galley. A student of Zen Buddhism, Lange finds a profound connection between ancient metaphysics and the frontiers of modern physics and computer science. "They all work with numbers," she says. After spending most of her creative life as a painter, printmaker, and photographer, the 64-year-old Lange became fascinated by the way computers break the world into elemental units—ones and zeros, yin and yang. Digitized video was a natural next step. "I like the mysteriousness of working with the signal, rather than hands-on," Lange says. "Signals that are running around in space."

***Mississippi Lotus* considers that most potent of Eastern symbols, the lotus. In this case, the wild lotuses grow in the back waters of the Mississippi river near her childhood home in Dubuque, Iowa.**

Lange manipulates the images with an "ancient video synthesizer, the Fairlite." For her installations, she captures them on computer disc and makes Cibachrome transparencies, which are mounted on old TV sets or light boxes. With these, "one gets a sense of color and light unlike any other medium except stained glass," she says, "although film is a close second."

–Will Annett



Artist Vidie Lang; her installation *Madonna Meditations*, below; a detail from *Mississippi Lotus*, below left.

Right: screen shot from *Mauve Desert*.

in*situ

floating exhibition venue

Sometime around Valentine's Day, more than 200 people crammed in to the balcony of a 1929 movie theater in Austin, Texas, to participate in "Fifty Feet of Love." Featured in this mini-fest *d'amour* were two types of Super 8 films: those shot on single 50-foot reels with all in-camera edits, and those edited to six minutes or less.

This exhibition was one of many organized by in*situ, a loose confederation of individuals in Austin devoted to "stealing art back from theory," according to co-founder Jon Ausbrooks.

"in*situ shows work that pushes the perception of an audience and expands the definition of what might be considered social art," says Ausbrooks.



The in*site logo

Born out of the frustration local film and video artists felt at not having an outlet to exhibit their edgy work, in*situ actively promotes experimental media by organizing gatherings and screenings wherever they can find a space.

"We place it literally in the streets or a variety of other urban settings that do not typically exist for framing art or aesthetics of any sort," Ausbrooks says of their floating showcase. "We have even exhibited films on the side of a building," once again demonstrating how creative thinking doesn't stop once the film's in the can.

–James Shelton

Adriene Jenik

CD-ROM hot rod

Adriene Jenik, 31, a video/TV maker from the Paper Tiger TV tradition and former video curator at L.A.C.E., now finds herself in the digital driver's seat. Her first





Meena Nanji

identity investigator

Acclaimed video artist Meena Nanji, 32, is just now learning about preproduction. "It's been very difficult for me," admits the Los Angeles-based South Asian mediamaker, who is not only directing her first feature film, but switching her entire mode of production—from cobbling together disparate found images in the editing room, to the more traditional trajectory starting with a script, and then casting, shooting, and editing.

Even Nanji's exquisite *Voices of the Morning*, a rumination on the strictures confining a Muslim woman, was composed of images shot without a plan. "I had this footage I'd shot five years prior in Kenya which I refound," she says. She'd also read Nawal El Sadaawi's *The Hidden Face of Eve*, and with this in mind created a startling and poetic portrait of repression and rebellion.

For the tentatively titled *Nets of Jewels*, Nanji started with a story about three generations of women in her family. "I'd written a script that was like a lecture," she admits. She passed this first draft along to videomaker and novelist Shani Mootoo, who "made it into a story."

Nanji will use flashbacks and her trademark layering of images in *Nets of Jewels*, which attempts to illustrate the inflection of history in personal identity. The film's structure is "like a spiral," she explains. "To go forward you have to go back; to understand the present, you have to look to the past."

–Holly Willis

CD-ROM, *Mauve Desert* , is a virtual road trip that uses narrative to lure you in—with considerable success. The project is due out this month, and word has already spread in the independent media community that this is one to watch.

Based on the experimental novel *Le Desert Mauve*, by Quebeçois author Nicole Brossard, *Mauve Desert* is a wild ride through desert landscapes, nuclear waste sites, and a teenage girl's rebellious psyche. No road signs tell you which way to click through this digital landscape. A varied cast of characters form the story: the protagonist (a 15-year-old girl), a geometrist, the novelist, the translator, and the maker herself. Jenik's project is also about states of translation: between film, video, and the digital medium; between languages and landscapes; and between fact and fiction.

Jenik's journey in making *Mauve Desert* parallels that of her two main characters, Maude and Melanie. Says the Los Angeles-based mediamaker, "I am striving to get to something beyond my reach—following my inspiration and instinct into new territories, depending on things in myself that I wasn't even sure were there."

–Julia Meltzer

Seth Kramer

minimalist with a message

Seth Kramer's plain-spoken disdain for convention marks him as a filmmaker to watch. "I'm interested in finding a new method of documentary to expand the audience," says the 25-year-old Philadelphian. Regarding the experimental nature of his work, he quips, "I'm not sure if it's experimental by choice or because it's ill-funded."



Like its modest title, Kramer's *Untitled* required no big budget, no bells and whistles—just a 16mm film camera, a little imagination, and one million grains of

Miroslaw Rogala

interactive pas de deux

In his studio, with an unobstructed view of the Chicago skyline, Miroslaw Rogala eagerly cues up a section from a collaborative, interactive work he has just completed with choreographer Shirley Mordine. "It has something like 26 image layers," he proudly announces as he pushes the play button.

Rogala creates interactive installations, utilizing layered and manipulated video images. "My work is like a dialogue between life and the pre-recorded, between randomness and control," he says. And, he might add, between the physical exhibition space and the psychological space of the viewer.

In *Lover's Leap*, an installation about destiny and "what we control and cannot control," a random viewer wearing headphones manipulates the visual and aural experience for herself and everyone around her. In *Nature Is Leaving Us*, a rumination about creating our own landscapes, a camera mounted on a remote-control cart re-shoots the installation's video wall and the audience watching it. The viewers, then, become part of the work itself.

Rogala studied painting in his native Poland before shifting to video at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Currently a visiting artist at Columbia College/Chicago, he says his works don't give answers, but are "statements to provoke the viewer to ask more questions."

–H.D. Motyl

Top: Rogala's interactive multimedia installation *Lovers Leap*; below, Rogala in his studio.



rice. The film documents Kramer's attempt to count six million grains of rice as a way of making more concrete the number of people who perished in the Holocaust.

Filmed over the course of a year, *Untitled*'s central image is Kramer's apartment and the jars of rice that slowly multiply. The filmmaker is a constant presence, making this clearly a personal odyssey. Stylistic elements of the diary film are present (casual chatting with friends; a lot of sitting around counting), but that form's solipsism is replaced by an acute historical and political awareness.

Unable to go to six million, Kramer decides the one million grains counted will stand for the children who died. Using the simplest tools, *Untitled* has an impact that's profound.

–Jerry White

Pocho Productions

cultural conquistadores

Esteban Zul and Lalo López, the duo behind Pocho Productions, spread their message of Chicano subversion in a variety of media, savvily connecting Web-surfers, video viewers, and newspaper readers into a common audience.

The Berkeley-based Zul, 31, is lead rapper for Aztlán Nation. López, 32, who lives in greater East Los Angeles, writes the "Mexiled" column for the *LA Weekly* and the syndicated cartoon "La Cucaracha." The two collaborate on Pocho Productions's videos, Virtual Varrio Web site (http://silcom.com:80/~tonkin/-pocho/varrio.html), *Pocho* magazine, and public interventions.

Their irreverent parodies unnerve both right-wingers and Mexican-American activists. Although irony is valued in Mexican culture, "Chicanos are irony-deficient," says López.

The artists have created several faux-conservative Mexican American groups and documented them in the videos *Hispanics for Wilson* and *PVLA Unmasked*. During the 1994 election, Hispanics for Wilson supported Gov. Pete Wilson's campaign with vows to deport themselves. Their Pocho Villa Liberation Army sacreligiously conflates the name of Mexican revolutionary leader Pancho Villa with *pocho*, a Mexican term for a tacky, uncultured Americanized Mexican.

Now Pocho Productions has created Hispanics Against the Liberal Takeover



(HALTO), which will be present at the GOP convention in San Diego (as part of an exhibition at the Centro Cultural de la Raza). Republicans will get to witness the inauguration of Borderwall Estates, the "world's longest condominium," built along HALTO's proposed fortification between the U.S. and Mexico.

–LAURA U. MARKS

Rachel Schreiber

alt.sex.bondage provocateur

For her recent video *Please Kill Me; I'm a Faggot Nigger Jew*, Rachel Schreiber went on the Internet's alt.sex.bondage forum to solicit responses on Nazi-fetish sadomasochism. As



we hear the words of these e-mail correspondents describing their use of Nazi paraphernalia, symbols, and role playing, low-resolution images of a woman shaving her pubic hair drift, dissolve, and entwine with family photographs of Schreiber's Jewish grandfather during his 1937 trip to Germany.

These images, which seem as if transmitted on-line, were shot with a Connectix, an inexpensive digital camera designed for use with a home computer. (Schreiber describes it as the Pixelvision of the late nineties.)

Having recently relocated to New York City after completing an M.F.A. at the California Institute of the Arts, Schreiber, 30, is developing themes she initially explored in still photography. Her 1994 video, *This Is Not Erotica*, provocatively juxtaposes constructions of Jewish women's sexuality with stories of ghetto uprisings during the Holocaust. Zivia Lubetkin and other Jewish women who fought in the Resistance are recurrent figures in her work. A far cry from such representations as *Schindler's List*, Schreiber's narrative fragments suggest the complexity with which the Holocaust is framed within contemporary consciousness.

–YOSHA GOLDSTEIN

Zack Stiglicz

high-density filmmaker

In his late thirties, Zack Stiglicz quit his job teaching political science at Williams College in Massachusetts, moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, and indulged his obsession with filmmaking. Now he says it's "like breathing. I have to do it to live." He has since moved to Chicago, where he obtained an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute.



Stiglicz is known for his experiments with 16mm film stocks: black-and-white and color, negative and reversal, and the printing of each to the other. He works to achieve highly saturated, almost unreal colors. Influenced by Bruce Connor, he cuts his original and found footage into a "collision of images." His fascination with found footage arises from "the absence of captivating images in the present day."

Stiglicz's films explore issues of gender and sexuality, love and desire, usually in his own life. His latest film, *Nothing Nobody Nowhere*, manipulates images from early cinema into a treatise on masculinity, maternity, and childhood.

His dense audio tracks interweave his own words with those of other authors (Sartre and Roland Barthes in *Gradiva*; Walt Whitman and Julia Kristeva in *Pompeii*). The words and images add up to being "a substitute for my inability to convey what is going on in my mind," he says.

–H.D. MOTYL

Victoria Vesna

body builder

The Net is a place where you can morph identities at will—in sex chat rooms, for instance. But media artist Victoria Vesna finds that voyeuristic and passive. Vesna is fascinated with the public aspects of life on the Web, despite its apparent anonymity and impermanence, and with the way users invest

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Matt McDaniel

hip-hop documentarian

With a home-video camera, Los Angeles native Matt McDaniel began chronicling the hip-hop underground in 1986 while an unpaid intern at KDAY, an all-rap radio station now five years defunct. Catching such then-emerging artists as Public Enemy, N.W.A., and Queen Latifah, he edited the uncensored tapes using two VCRs and dropped in some beats with a Radio Shack mixer.

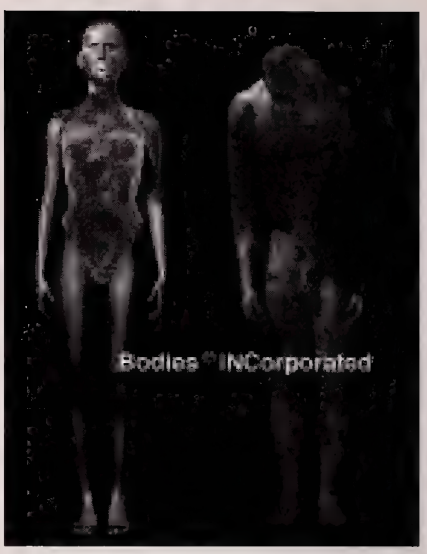
The self-trained McDaniel retains this jarring style for his upcoming *Media Killa: Voices from the Street Raw and Real*, an hour-long video that scrutinizes the high profile Black males put on trial by both the justice system and the mainstream media circus (including O.J. Simpson, Rodney King, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Mike Tyson, and Tupac Shakur).

"It's pretty much focusing on the ignorance in the media's coverage, their presumption of guilt on all these people. The hype, over-exaggeration, and spin put on them," says the 30-year-old dreadlocked artist of his "consciousness raising work."

***Media Killa* is a cacophony of rapid-fire images culled from several years worth of news reports that's often interspersed with footage from the Civil Rights era. McDaniel juxtaposes this with his own on-camera confrontations with mainstream journalists. It's a participatory in-your-face tactic he brands as akin to a "hip-hop *Roger & Me*."**

–Andrew O. Thompson





real-life concreteness in their cyber alter egos.

With the help of colleagues at the University of California, Santa Barbara, (including Bob Nideffer, Web artist; Kenny Fields, sound; Nathan Freitas, VRML programming; and Jason Schleifer, programming), Vesna, 36, has created a Web site (and soon-to-be VRML) called Bodies© INCorporated (http://www.arts.ucsb.edu/concrete). Here one can "order" a body to specification, choosing a name, gender, age, sexual preference, and physical characteristics.

Not surprisingly, many of the first bodies on order were nubile playmates for young male users. To challenge this, Vesna modified what the bodies could be made of: not skin, but lava, air, blue plastic, copper, and other incorporeal substances. When users wanted to delete the bodies they'd created, Vesna refused. "People got frantic," she recalls. One man even threatened to sue her.

Now she is designing three new components: users who want to get rid of their body must choose among a number of gruesome deaths in Necropolis. If you do not destroy your body within 40 days, it enters Limbo. If you choose to go public with your body, it will go on corporate-style display in Showplace!!!. The message is that on the Net, just as in RL, you cannot lightly bring life into being.

–Laura U. Marks

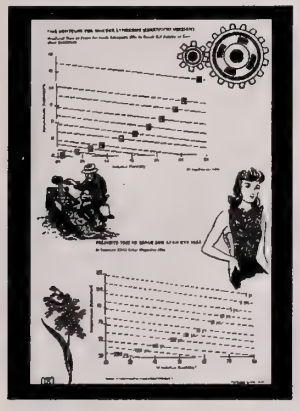
Timoleon Wilkins

Zine publisher

Celluloidall publisher and experimental filmmaker Timoleon Wilkins is a film purist with a vision and an attitude. Bucking the current wave of technological

optimism without falling into the neo-Luddite trap, he sees himself as a Quixotic figure on a mission to rescue experimental film from the "childishness" of contemporary video and multimedia.

The 26-year-old San Franciscan's tool in trade is the self-produced 'zine *Celluloidall*, an anti-product of the computer age that offers fellow experimental filmmakers everything from practical tips (like how to develop your own 16mm stock) to more offbeat bits of knowledge (like the dingiest places to see porno flicks in San Francisco). *Celluloidall*, which has been published roughly every five months since December 1993, includes lab information, listings of film events, reviews of experimental work, anecdotes, and, in issue #5, a call for entries for the first Celluloidall Film Festival, c/o the San Francisco Cinematheque.



Wilkins' profound devotion to filmmaking as a visceral process is matched by his commitment to low-budget production. "I hate that whole mentality that dictates who can make films and who can't," says Wilkins, the maker of two shorts, *Trees* and *Blue Western Sun* and a member of the board of Canyon Cinema. "None of the experimental filmmakers I love started off independently wealthy."

–Mary Ann Caminero

Brad Wolfley

shooting angst with a grin

Brad Wolfley, 27, is one of the latest directors to explore the adolescent angst film. But unlike many of his predecessors and contemporaries, he has opted to shoot in small-gauge formats, including Super 8 and 16mm film and Hi8 and pixel video, using experimental techniques like exclusive use of macro focal lengths and complex soundtracks.

Focusing on gay and straight men at the crossroads between youth and adulthood, Wolfley's works revolve around communication, sexuality, dreams, and entertainment.

In deadpan fashion, his five funny shorts play upon the obsessions and paranoias of Generation Xers, enlarging mundane trivialities into major drama: we learn about the importance of chins and beards (*Who Is This Beardless Guy in My Bed?*), the marriage of salty potato chips and sensuality (*Awkward for Years*), and the meaning of life and fast food (*Pita #47*).



Hailing from Albuquerque, New Mexico, Wolfley describes his childhood in the Southwest as a "crucifixion on an electric fence protecting a hollow mountain of nuclear weaponry." Since receiving his M.F.A. from Rutgers University and a 1995 New Jersey State Council on the Arts grant, he has returned to his stomping grounds to produce a feature film consisting of a series of short suburban tales.

–Albert Gabriel Nigrin

About the writers:

Mary Ann Caminero is a film reviewer for Film Close-Ups *on KALX-FM in Berkeley, CA.* • *Will Annett is a freelance writer specializing in entertainment and telecommunications. He writes a film column for the* Boulder Weekly *and lives in Colorado.* • *Yosha Goldstein is a freelance writer and independent videomaker living in Brooklyn.* • *Meredith E. Holch is an independent filmmaker and writer living in Brooklyn.* • *Laura U. Marks writes about and curates independent media.* • *Julia Meltzer lives, sleeps, eats, and breathes in a basement that houses too much technology at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.* • *Albert Gabriel Nigrin is working on* The Furies, *a multiscreen experimental film about female phantoms who haunt New Jersey's Raritan River.* • *H.D. Motyl is a film/videomaker living in Chicago whose latest project is a children's tape called* Milk & Cookies. • *James Shelton is an Austin-based writer and photographer and the president of TEX-CINEMA productions.* • *Andrew O. Thompson is the assistant editor of* American Cinematographer. • *Marsha Walker is a writer who lives in Baltimore.* • *Jerry White's writing on film has appeared in the U.S., Canada, and India.* • *Holly Willis is the West Coast editor of* Filmmaker *magazine.*

Photo credits: Photo of Stiglez by Tchavdar Gueorguiev; all others courtesy mediamakers.





More than anyone else, curators are in closest contact with the latest crop of experimental films and videos, while distributors stay on top of the fluctuations in the market. To size up recent developments in experimental work and its audiences, *The Independent* posed a few key questions to four major distributors and five curators.



4 DISTRIBUTORS

CANYON CINEMA'S GROSS SALES AND RENTALS ARE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH IN 1996. CLEARLY, THE AUDIENCE FOR CINEMATIC ART IS THERE.
—Dominic Angerame, Canyon Cinema

The Distributors

How has the market for experimental film/video shifted over the past five years? Who and where are the audiences today?

Dominic Angerame
Canyon Cinema

During the past five to seven years, the demand for experimental film has shifted in two major areas of the marketplace.

In the past, the chief market for avant-garde film was consistently concentrated in two sectors: cinema departments and film studies programs in universities and colleges; and small experimental showcases and theaters. From 1969 to 1990, approximately 90 percent of Canyon's business came from these two sources. The other 10 percent consisted of individuals, student film associations, and commercial theaters.

Severe cuts in state and federal funding have forced most small experimental showcases and theaters to stop renting films. In place of theme shows, they seem to have increased the number of one-person shows, for which filmmakers provide their own material, eliminating the distributor. During the seventies and eighties, approximately 25 percent of Canyon's rentals came from this area of the market. Today, it's less than 10 percent.

Universities remain Canyon's chief renters. However, this area of our market has dropped from 80 to 60 percent. Many distinguished film artists who were tenured faculty have retired, and their replacements seem to consist of Hollywood wannabes whose sensibilities do not fit the avant-garde aesthetic.

This lost market is being replaced by an increasing number of smaller colleges whose part-time faculty show a great interest in experimental work. In addition, rentals from student film associations have risen approximately 15 percent, reflecting a growing interest among young students in contemporary and classic avant-garde films.

There has also been a noticeable increase in rentals and sales to overseas theaters, festivals, and experimental showcases. In fact, approximately 15 percent of our business is now foreign, versus two percent prior to 1990. We have also seen a large increase in rentals from North American festivals, from museums with film programs, and from individuals conducting research and study.

Motion picture distributors are becoming more and more scarce. For those who wish to continue the tradition of the motion picture experience, Canyon Cinema and other such organizations have become the sole providers of source materials. But we are optimistic about the future audience for experimental film and video. Even with these market shifts, Canyon Cinema's gross sales and rentals are at an all-time high in 1996. Clearly, the audience for cinematic art is there.

Kate Horsfield
Video Data Bank

As public and foundation support for experimental video became available in the early seventies, a media arts infrastructure was established, with opportunities for screenings in festivals, media arts centers, alternative spaces, and museums.

By the mid-eighties, colleges and universities had become the major clients for experimental video. At first it was only art and media studies departments, but that shifted as faculty began teaching multiculturalism, postmodern theory, and the role of mainstream media in the marginalization of specific groups. The proliferation of alternative, decentralized media that addressed social issues soon attracted other university departments, such as journalism, feminist studies, queer studies, and African American studies.

The problems in distributing experimental video occur as we try to move beyond known buyers in the educational system. There are many obstacles: the lack of awareness of alternative media, the difficulty of comprehending experimental styles, the lack of funds to pay institutional fees, no clear strategy linking small distributors to cen-

tralized purchasing agents, and distributors' lack of promotional dollars.

Nevertheless, the rental and sales of experimental video has grown steadily, by as much as 20 percent each year for the past 20 years. The Video Data Bank has seen earned income skyrocket in the past two years. New business from European cultural markets and European and Japanese broadcasters has outpaced any new buying trends in the United States.

Just as we were beginning to feel confident that earned income could support a promotional campaign to new and more difficult markets, such as public libraries and K-12 educators, funding sources began to encounter seismic shifts. The 104th Congress's attacks on the arts have led to declining funds for state arts councils and a disastrous restructuring of the National Endowment for the Arts. We are beginning to feel the effects across the spectrum, especially as screening opportunities for experimental work decline. The main concern is survival until we can shift from a dependency on public funding to market expansion through digital technologies.

Now that Sony has stopped manufacturing 3/4" equipment, we are unclear about what the next format will be in the dawning era of digital distribution. We get requests for titles on CD-ROM, a format we will begin using when (and if) the DVD format is established in the educational market.

Many distributors, including the Video Data Bank, are starting to offer catalogs at Web sites. It's too soon to determine if Web interest will translate into enough earned income to replace what is being lost elsewhere. However, we are hopeful that the Internet will deliver new users and unbounded opportunities for presenting experimental media, profiling videographers, and maybe even selling tapes.

Stephen Vitiello
Electronic Arts Intermix

Despite a bleak beginning, video art has survived the first half of the nineties. 1990 saw sharp declines in distribution, precipitated by the recession and widespread funding cuts. However, our distribution has experienced a remarkable turnaround. In each successive year since 1993, EAI's business has reached the highest level in the organization's 25-year history.

One of the most significant developments is that 60 percent of our distribution activity now comes from Europe.

Another is the increased acceptance of video by the art world. Internationally, arts institutions account for the largest market segment. 1992 was a breakthrough year, when installations by Gary Hill, Bill Viola, Tony Oursler, and Dara Birnbaum were included in the Documenta exhibition in Kassel, Germany, and were singled out by art press and curators. Simultaneously, young visual artists and media activists working with low-tech video are receiving widespread attention. With this shift to artists' video (as opposed to video art), we have seen very active distribution for artists like Sophie Calle, Paul McCarthy, Mike Kelley, and Cheryl Donegan, who are known primarily for their painting, sculpture, or photography.

Another important trend is the tremendous interest in historical video, particularly conceptual-performance work. Art institutions are mounting historical exhibitions; schools are offering history courses; and video preservation initiatives are growing. Currently, one of our most popular artists is Vito Acconci. Significantly, he has not made video since 1984, and his most requested tapes are from the early seventies.

Distribution in the U.S. remains fairly stable. Our domestic breakdown is:

educational:	33%
arts institutions:	31.5%
libraries:	24%
individuals:	5%
television:	5%
festivals:	1.5%

Several special initiatives have helped revitalize these markets. The MacArthur Foundation's Videoforum project, for example, which offers thematic titles to public libraries at discounted prices, resulted in the sale of over 150 tapes by Victor Masayesva Jr. after a year in which not one sale was made to a U.S. public library.

IT IS IRONIC THAT JUST AS WE ARE SEEING MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES, TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF FUNDING ARE ALL BUT DISAPPEARING.
—Stephen Vitello, Electronic Arts Intermix

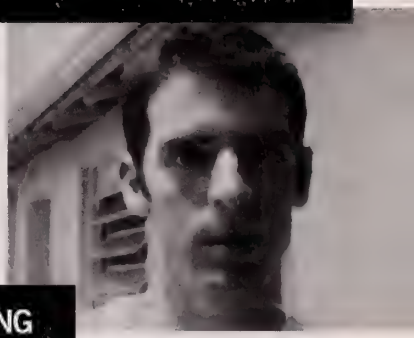
It is ironic that just as we are seeing more diverse audiences, traditional sources of funding are all but disappearing. Many would argue that video is facing an identity crisis in the face of new media and the success of independent cinema. We are responding to the new paradigms by developing an electronic catalog on the Web and preserving our aging tapes from the sixties and seventies. The one thing we know for certain is that the years leading up to the millennium will bring even more dramatic changes.

Chris Hoover
Noon Pictures

One unforeseen side-effect of the decline in funding for experimental film exhibition has been an increased dependence on academia, both financially and in terms of critical reception.

While university rentals and purchases have provided much of the income that has kept experimental media distribution alive, this dependence has had serious side-effects, particularly the complete drying up of any critical environment outside of academia. The production/reception loop has become too small, with both the work and the

+ 5 CURATORS = THE BIG PICTURE



critics being produced within the confines of often limited critical discourses. One unfortunate consequence that has affected the entire field is that it has become increasingly difficult to promote and book work on any basis other than the "issues" it addresses. Truly radical work, such as Joao Monteiro's *Comedy of God* or Jean-Luc Godard's *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*, have almost no pre-existing audience, because there is no institutional framework for looking at work outside of specific content-related issues.

The artists who have broken out of these limitations are those few who, like Leslie Thornton, have managed to build up a substantial body of work and profile as an "auteur" in their own right.

On the other hand, there are exciting possibilities for cross-fertilization with the burgeoning theatrical situation. Wide-scale distribution of gay and lesbian films (largely through the work of Strand Releasing and a few other distributors) brought a variety of formally challenging work to a large audience that had little exposure to it. The resulting explosion in audiences and an acceptance of an "independent aesthetic" have made it easier to book challenging films into theaters than in previous years.



Noon Pictures, from left: Tom Bigelow, Chris Hoover, David Barker, and Toby Vann. Photo courtesy of artists.

The theatrical possibilities brought by this have only begun to develop. Five years ago a film like Greg Bordowitz's *Fast Trip Long Drop* would have been confined to the academic realm within which it was produced, but over the past three years we have managed to play it theatrically in 10 cities and book it for limited runs in another 300 venues, as well as sell it to television, video, and foreign distributors. In this case, the theatrical audiences were vital to giving the film the momentum and visibility it needed to be so widely booked.

The Curators

How has the work of experimental makers shifted over the past five years? Who and where is the audience for experimental media today?

Bart Weiss
The Dallas Video Festival

Looking back at my festival programs over the past five years, the main change I see is in the technology. Now that the Commodore is toast and the VideoToaster has become stale, we have moved into "digital movies," interactive media, and the Web. These technologies give artists greater control for less bucks. And the new digital movies can be placed on the Web, reaching audiences who now have the computing power to download them.

WHILE UNIVERSITY RENTALS AND PURCHASES HAVE PROVIDED MUCH OF THE INCOME, THIS DEPENDENCE HAS HAD SERIOUS SIDE-EFFECTS.
—Chris Hoover, Noon Pictures

We've shown interactive work at the Dallas Video Festival for years. While there's been some strong work, we're still waiting for the ground-breaking work to happen—the D.W. Griffith or Maya Deren to show us the way. Greg Roach and John Sanborn have done some great work bringing narrative into the interactive world. Audiences will accept experimentation, but the cost of producing and marketing CD-ROMs is high. If it's hard for the big guys to make any money, it's even harder for an indie.

Short, personal, digital movies, often made on Adobe Premiere, are another place where experimentation is happening. These works come from an aesthetic pioneered by Dana Ashley, Harry Mott, and the American Film Institute's Advanced Technology Program. This is one area where AFI has been out in front, and I applaud them for that.

I started programming video art in nightclubs before starting the festival. It's amazing what people will watch with a drink in their hands. I could get a large audience to appreciate experimental work who would never come to a museum. There *is* a audience for experimental work; you just have to create a good environment. Let's face it, it's just not that cool to go to a museum.

If there is a problem with the loss of the cinephile, as Susan Sontag suggested in the *New York Times Magazine* a few months ago, there is a bigger problem in the experimental world. Audiences *will* come to a program of experimental shorts, but they are reluctant to attend screenings of longer experimental works.

But somehow through all of this there is a new community of experimental makers and audiences. Back in the heyday of experimental film, Gene Youngblood wrote *Expanded Cinema*, a book that chronicled and inspired experimental filmmakers. Perhaps the best sign is that Gene is coming out with a new book.



I STARTED PROGRAMMING VIDEO ART IN NIGHTCLUBS. IT'S AMAZING WHAT PEOPLE WILL WATCH WITH A DRINK IN THEIR HANDS.
—Bart Weiss,
Dallas Video Festival

Jim Hubbard
The New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film Festival

Two interrelated phenomena—the explosion of exciting and re-energizing work by people of color, and the complete integration of film and video—have utterly remade the experimental scene over the past few years.

Because of its ubiquity and portability, video has provided younger people, especially people of color and AIDS activists, with access to unfettered self-expression that 16mm and Super 8 provided for previous generations.

Experimental exhibitions flip back and forth between film and video; works are shot on video and transferred to film, and vice versa; film and video techniques cross-fertilize each other. Audiences and most makers have stopped making an essential distinction between the two. Makers choose one medium over the other because of what is accessible at the moment, not because of some ideological connection. I imagine the next 5 or 10 years will bring a similar integration of computer-based moving images.

Ten years ago, the New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival was founded because the few venues that showed experimental work tended to have an extremely rigid definition of "experimental" that excluded almost all lesbian and gay work created after 1972. Now there are even fewer venues, many of which are programmed by the same entrenched curators who include lesbian and gay work only in the most timid, uncomprehending, and ghettoized fashion.

Film schools also bear a great responsibility for the lack of appreciation for experimental work. At every college screening I curate, I hear the same response: "We never get to see work like this here."

Audiences exist where curators have worked hard to create a strong connection between the community and the work—at lesbian and gay film festivals, Asian American film festivals, and a very few avant-garde film and grassroots showcases. The primary audience for experimental media today probably would not recognize itself as such, because the term "experimental" has come to be seen as merely another genre, most often associated with one particular practice—structuralism. But in fact, when lesbian and gay audiences and African-Americans and other people of color see work that expresses their own experiences in new and exciting ways, they can appreciate it without categorizing it as experimental.


Curator Jim Hubbard.

I have no grand prognostications for the next 5 or 10 years, but I feel that all media should be experimental. Why rehash the same clichés? Why not explore the furthest boundaries of the medium, one's innermost feelings, and most compelling ideas?

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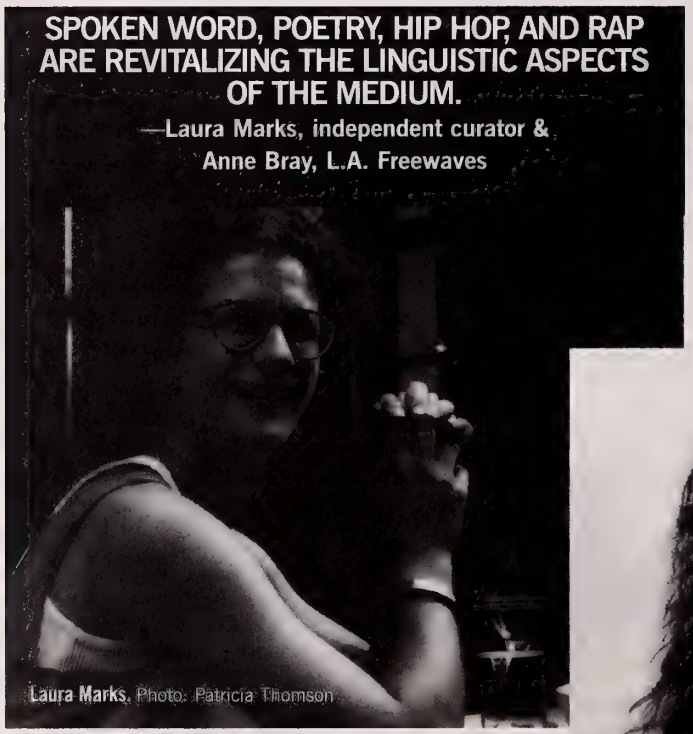
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Anne Bray, L.A. Freewaves & *Laura U. Marks*, independent curator

The most interesting changes in experimental media have been in who is speaking and to whom. Ten years ago video art was associated with museums and galleries, but now the sites have shifted. More artists are working in high schools and community organizations, for example, and young makers are coming up outside the art world. Artists are not disassociating themselves from the art world as much as incorporating other genres and contexts.



Laura Marks. Photo: Patricia Thomson

The categories of what used to be called "video art" have merged with animation, experimental narrative, and documentary into what might simply be called "independent video." We find that work that stays within the old genre restrictions is often seen as elitist or pretentious, while what's interesting is all the things that have been *added* to video art—take, for instance, James Duesing's computer animations, which are stylistically radical and also involve social issues, or Ming-Yuen S. Ma's videos addressing political issues of Asian and queer identity in a visually poetic way.

In the past, experimental media was generally white media; most institutions in the U.S. still seem to believe this. But some of the most interesting experimental media is from makers who have only recently had access to the tools of production, such as people of color, poor people, and youth. Many have an active interest in transforming the language of media to express their realities. And new makers are having an impact on how media are used. For example, spoken word, poetry, hip hop, and rap are revitalizing the linguistic aspects of the medium. Potentially, with the Internet and low-cost camera equipment, everyone who wants to could be speaking. CD-ROMs and Web sites are offering radically new forms to which women artists, such as Janice Tanaka and Adriene Jenik, are responding particularly well.

For both of us, curating involves actively seeking out new work and circulating it beyond its original communities and venues. We find that audiences are most receptive to experimental work when it is presented thematically and mixed with other genres, suggesting that there are many ways to tell these stories. "Video art" has to have evident content to be compelling to new audiences.

Once artists had an antagonistic relationship to television. Now, the changing relationship to audiences also means that many experimental makers are producing long works that might cross over to mainstream television.

Marian Masone The New York Video Festival

A five-year span in which to examine changes in the work of experimental makers is ideal for me, as the New York Video Festival is entering its fifth year. Many of those makers who have come down the pike lately are putting subversive spins on the usual themes. Cheryl Donegan does just that with work that at first appears to be simple documentation of bare-bones performance art, but it exposes the fragile link between fantasy and mythology in the context of gender and art (*Kiss My Royal Irish Ass*; *Rehearsal*; *GracefulPhatSheba* to name a few). Kip Fulbeck moves gracefully from issues of Asian-American identity and racial taboos (*Asian Studs Nightmare*; *Some Questions for 28 Kisses*) to family concerns that envelop ideas of cultural identity (*Nine Fish*; *L.A. Christmas*).


L.A. Freewaves' Anne Bray.

There are new takes on new technologies every day, but some of the most exciting work is being done at the low end. Making spectacular use of the Fisher-Price PixelVision camera, for instance, are Sadie Benning, who has had us witness her maturation as feisty lesbian artist, and Michael O'Reilly, who uses this tool for powerful meditations on family, life, and dreams.

Other mediamakers strive to get past the rhetoric and politics of life and focus, without any window dressing, on what's actually out there. Concerned with issues of surveillance, Eric Saks looks at how technology is used to regulate the populace and plays our paranoia back to us. Brian Springer collects live satellite feeds to exhibit what the media and those in charge of it are really doing. It's the starkness of these unmediated images that shocks us into recognition. I think as time goes on, more and more experimental makers will be going back to basics—using low-end technology to comment on the high end.



The home of Masone's New York Video Festival, Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater.
Photo courtesy of artist

Audiences for experimental work are incredibly specific. There are no hordes of people who will run anywhere to see anything labeled "experimental," but those who will are a dedicated bunch and will look hard and travel far (okay, *relatively* far) to see work that interests them. It is really up to exhibitors to find these audiences. One way of doing that is to present this kind of work on a regular basis, so that people know where to look. At Lincoln Center, the audience for experimental media has been growing slowly but steadily. Hopefully, as more experimental programs are put into place, that audience will grow even more.

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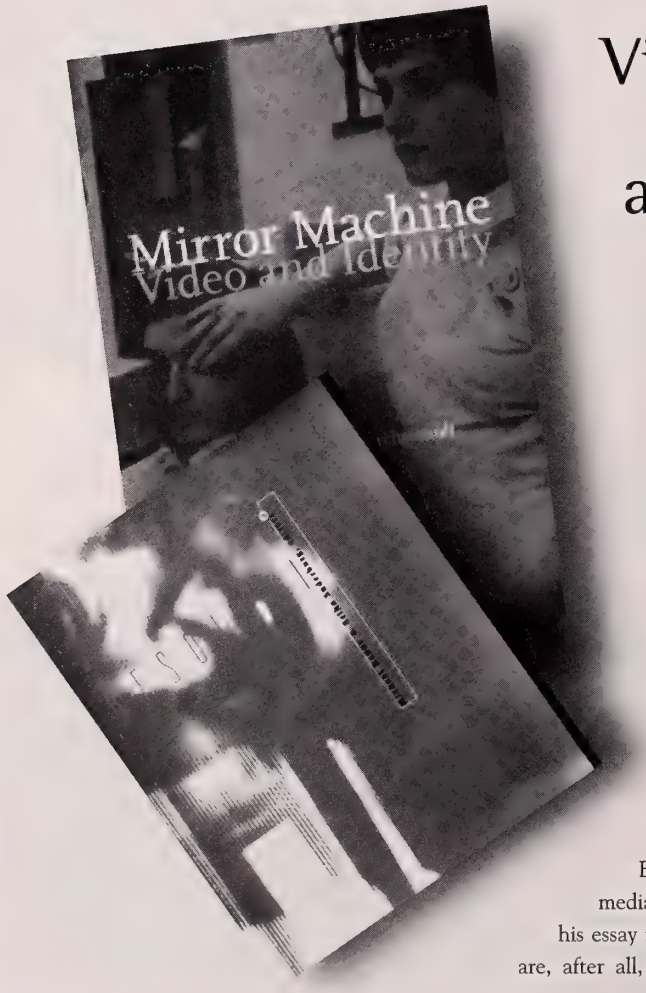
BY LAURA U. MARKS

Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices
edited by Michael Renov and Erika Suderberg
Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1996; 419 pp.

Mirror Machine: Video and Identity
edited by Janine Marchessault
Toronto: YYZ Books and CRCII, 1995; 239 pp.

INDEPENDENT VIDEOMAKERS KNOW HOW LITTLE serious writing there is about video *as video*: not as a low-resolution version of film on to which we can slap the whole tired body of film theory; nor as an under-distributed version of television that can illustrate arguments about popular culture; nor as gallery art that happens to be time-based and hard to sell unless it's repackaged as video sculpture.

Two recent books devoted to independent video do a lot to improve this situation, though there is an irony in the timing of this intervention. Video is finally being granted a history and a theory just at the time it is becoming a historical artifact. Artists' tapes from the early 1970s are decaying and disappearing at a time when video archives, such as those at the Long Beach Museum of Art, are losing funds to preserve them. New computer-based media are singing their siren songs of durability and easy distribution, though the question remains who and where are the audiences for these new forms. But as Michael Nash of the new-media company Inscape points out in his essay in *Resolutions*, "All technologies are, after all, transitional." The new media share many of the distinctive characteristics of video, such as electronic reproduction and transmission. Even as our media shift over the coming years, the ways we have (finally) developed to talk about video will continue to be pertinent.



Video is finally being granted a history and a theory just at the time it is becoming a historical artifact.

Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices is a large, ambitious collection, bringing together 24 original essays by critics, scholars, and artists mainly from the U.S. (and many with a Los Angeles connection), but also from Europe, Canada, Japan, and Brazil. The book is a follow-up to the 1986 publication by Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, *Resolutions: A Critique of Video Art*, which prompted an ongoing effort to fill the gap of writing about video art and the history of the medium. The book is designed not to pin down the definition of video in terms of aesthetics, politics, and other parameters, but to keep its meaning open. This fluidity is admirable but a little frustrating in a book of this scope and can make the reader long for genealogies of which artists have worked together, pie charts of funding sources, and other hard facts.

Resolutions' most important contribution is its assurance that there are people out there who care about independent video and have brains cells to spare for theorizing it. Attentive writing about experimental media is extremely rare: this kind of work is just hard to describe, and the temptation is strong for critics to see it through the filter of their own concerns. In many of these essays, a scholar treats the work

of one or a handful of artists—Judith Mayne on Julie Zando; David James on Lynn Hershman; Marita Sturken on Woody Vasulka, Rea Tajiri, Janice Tanaka, and Karen Finley; Laura Kipnis on "transgressive" female video artists, etc. Though this sort of attention to individual video artists is important, I wanted practical details to round out the theoretical discussions. Who sees these works and where? How were the productions funded? Most of the artists covered here are well established (and many names are repeated from chapter to chapter). I longed to read of artists I'd never heard of, which was only the case in a couple of the non-U.S. contributions. Along the same lines, it was surprising to see little reference to the work of people of color other than stars such as Marlon Riggs, and less to the exciting new work being produced by youth makers.

There are a handful of essays in *Resolutions* that you can really sink your teeth into, which are devoted to a historical perspective or to examining a single issue or work in depth. Some of the more historical pieces include Monica Frota's wonderfully detailed account of how the Kayapo Indians of Brazil used video to develop strategies of resistance and cultural rejuvenation; Patricia R. Zimmermann's impassioned discussion of video activism for reproductive rights; Chon Noriega's pocket history of Chicano video; and Bérénice Reynaud's compendium of video practices in China.

The technology of video comes into focus in a couple of fascinating essays. John Belton gives a history of video as a sound technology rather than an imaging technology and compares film and television in terms of recording and transmission media. Michael Nash discusses the future of video and emerging technologies. He usefully argues that computer media are still largely text-based and the media arts of the future will have to be informed by visual poetics developed in video and other media if they are to be more than on-line magazines. A number of essays take a theoretical approach to a body of videos, such as Marita Sturken's and Erika Suderberg's essays on video and memory and Christine Tamblyn's meditation on consumer video.

What I find most exciting among the theoretical essays are the ones that push their intellectual or poetic approach to an extreme. European criticism has a very different tone from most North American writing, an expansive, speculative quality that is sometimes annoying or incomprehensible to us pragma-

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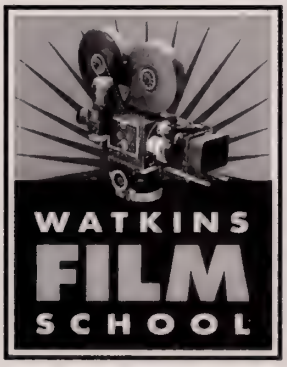
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tists, but sometimes stimulating, when domestic efforts leave us unmoved. French critic Raymond Bellour brings his tireless shot-by-shot analysis to Woody Vasulka's *The Art of Memory*. Bellour's reading of the tape as a history of war and of cinema is interesting, but what is most compelling is to follow this high theorist's linguistic gymnastics when describing Vasulka's computer-generated images. One of the most beautiful contributions to this volume is Italian critic Rosanna Albertini's essay about video's delicate and complex relationship to the representation of reality, whatever reality is. The other is Bill Horrigan's tenderly cynical, long blues riff on how soap operas deal with AIDS.

There is always a tension between the current state of independent video practice and the technological and social potential that its makers and theorists picture, and *Resolutions* shows signs of that tension. The book is devoted to alternative video practices, and for the most part not to television or other commercial uses of the medium. But by far the majority of the video works discussed here are video art, the stuff that is exhibited in galleries, museums, and universities. Existing tapes that circulate in other ways, such as AIDS activist media and indigenous media, are mentioned by only a few writers, although there are many mentions in the abstract of the possibility of alternative video distribution and broadcast.

THE ANTHOLOGY *MIRROR MACHINE: VIDEO AND* Identity, edited by Montreal-based critic Janine Marchessault, is smaller, more structured, and, for those reasons, more solid than *Resolutions*. Writing on art tends to be taken more seriously in Canada than in the United States. This may reflect a quasi-protectionist attitude toward Canadian culture, underrepresented outside the country but a subject of fierce self-examination within. Thirteen writers discuss the problem of how independent video in Canada has been used both to assert and to critique identity. The scope of this question ranges from Marchessault's concrete discussion of the circumstances surrounding the federally sponsored Challenge for Change community media projects of the early 1970s, to Christine Ross's theoretical essay on how the video image, as a surface, critiques depth and erases identity.

While the book entertains the same slipperiness of video's definition that *Resolutions* does, it is edited to acknowledge a number of approaches to that definition: institutional contexts, discursive histories, ontologies of video, and video's relationship to community and communication. Even the most densely theoretical essays in *Mirror Machine* tend to have a historical backbone that gives them more substance. Relationships that are implied in *Resolutions* are spelled out in *Mirror Machine*: Kevin Dowler discusses the influence of government funding on video aesthetics; many writers address where independent video is produced and exhibited; and a number of these pieces take up video's relationship to national identity. For example, Monika Kin Gagnon re-inserts Asian identity into the history of video art, beginning with Nam June Paik: she notes that when Martha Rosler deconstructed Paik's hero status in her well-known essay "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," she ignored the radical perspective that Paik's status as a Korean immigrant gave him on North American media.

Even the most densely theoretical essays in Mirror Machine tend to have a historical backbone.

Many of the Canadian artists discussed here are important in their own right and should be better known outside the country, such as Colin Campbell, Vera Frenkel, Lisa Steele, and Paul Wong. But many of the productions addressed also shed light on the last 20 years of American independent video. Beyond the well-known precedent set by the Challenge for Change program for American community media, there are a number of artist-run centers and collectives above the 49th parallel that pioneered artists' video production and exhibition, as Dut Tuer describes in her contribution.

Along with *Resolutions*, *Mirror Machine* is a valuable addition to the bookshelves of anyone who wants not only an overview of independent video production but a wide range of ways to think and write about it.

Laura U. Marks writes on and curates independent media.

BY KATHRYN BOWSER

SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., AUG. 1 FOR OCTOBER ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED. LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT.

DOMESTIC

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, mid-Sept., CA. Sponsored by American Motion Picture Society, nonprofit organization of cinematographers & videographers, competitive fest celebrated 66th yr in 1995. Competition cats: films/videos made w/ no commercial or financial objective & which have no prior sales or rental agreement, films by students enrolled in cinematography or videography classes, ind. films/videos & commercial films/videos. Winning entries & others suitable for public showing screened at Society's annual convention & other venues. Cash, trophies & certificates awarded. No time limit on entries. Previous winners cannot be re-entered. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", S-8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: early Aug. Contact: George Cushman, chair, American Int'l Film & Video Festival, American Motion Picture Society, Box 4034, Long Beach, CA 90804-0034, (310) 498-1634.

ARIZONA CINEMA SHORTS FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct., AZ. Films & videos 30 min. or less & made for $3,000 or less accepted. Fest dedicated to film/videomakers on low-to-no budget who "produce creative, noncommercial cinema art." All genres accepted. Cash awards. Formats: 16mm, S-8, 8mm, video in any format (screened in VHS). Entry fee: $15-20 per entry. Deadline: Sept 14. Contact: Larry Holloway, dir., Arizona Cinema Shorts Film & Video Fest, 402 N. Sitgreaves, Flagstaff, AZ 86001; (520) 779-0416.

CINDY COMPETITION, Sept. 30, CA. Now in 38th yr, Int'l CINDY (Cinema in Industry) Competition is one of world's longest-running audiovisual events. Founded in 1959 to honor talents of industrial filmmakers, fest now celebrates linear & interactive multimedia. Last yr's event drew over 2,300 entries from 17 countries, participating in over 100 broadcast & nonbroadcast cats. Gold, Silver, Bronze & honorable mention awards presented, along w/ John Cleese Comedy Award, Wolfgang Bayer Cinematography Award & Robert Townsend Social Issues Award. 7 regional competitions cover US & Canada; winners receive awards at industry trade shows such as Sight & Sound Expo in Columbus, OH. Regional winners automatically eligible for final judging for fest in San Diego. Deadlines: July 31 (N.E. US & E. Canada, N.W. US & W. Canada, S.E. US); Aug. 31 (S.W. US, N.Central US). Contact: Int'l CINDY Competition, 9531 Jamacha Blvd., ste. 263, Spring Valley, CA 91977-5628; (619) 461-1600; fax: 461-1606; http://www.webbiz.com/CINDY AWARDS.

CONTEMPORARY FILMS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA, Nov. 29-Dec. 14, NY. Founded in 1993, fest presents "films that describe human experience of people of African descent all over world." Fest presents cinematographic works coming from varied countries & cultures: U.S., European, West Indian, Afro-Latino & African. About 30 films screened for auds estimated at over 5,000. Fest also organizes roundtables & discussions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. No entry fee. Deadline: late Aug. Contact: Diarah N'Daw-Spech, gen. manager, Contemporary Films of the African Diaspora, Art Mattan Productions, 535 Cathedral Parkway, ste 14B, New York, NY 10025; (212) 749-6020, fax: 316-6020.

EMPIRE STATE EXHIBITIONS, Aug. 23-31, NY. Int'l independent film exhibition runs at New York State Fair in Syracuse. Cash prizes awarded in cats of narrative feature, narrative short, doc feature, doc short, experimental & animation. All films must be composite prints in 16mm or 35mm. Deadline: July 14. For info & appl. form, contact (212) 802-4679.

FESTIVAL OF ILLINOIS FILM AND VIDEO ARTISTS, late Sept., IL. Entrants must be residents of IL. Fest formed in '75 to support work of IL film & video artists, particularly emerging artists & short film producers. Works directed or produced primarily for instruction, education, promotion, or advertising not considered. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs & not exceed 30 min. Cash prizes totaling $2,500 & Certificates of Merit awarded: Best of Fest ($250), Jury's Special Selection ($350), Special Achievement ($350), Honorable Mention ($150). Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $15 ind, $10 student. Contact: Lisa Formosa, dir., Festival of Illinois Film & Video Artists, Columbia College Department of Film & Video, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605-1996; (312) 663-1600 x434, fax: 986-8208.

ROBERT FLAHERTY FILM SEMINAR, Aug. 3-8, NY. Now in 42nd edition, Robert Flaherty Film Seminar is int'l forum for independent video & cinema professionals & supporters "enthusiastic about discovering new forms of personal & cultural expression." Held at Wells College in Aurora, NY, over 100 people gather for established & emerging film and video artists to present work for screening & discussion. Seminar open to artists, scholars, curators, students & critics from N. America & abroad. Works incl. exp, doc, fiction, animation & hybrid forms. Provides "unparalleled opportunity to experience a real sense of the creative community, far removed from everyday distractions, concentrating solely on the process behind the camera." Screenings held 3 times each day, followed by discussion & debate on arts & politics of media. This yr's theme is "Landscapes & Place," curated by Ruth Bradley, Kathy High & Loretta Todd. Fees: $650 for registration, accommodation & transportation. Special weekend pkg available. Contact: Michelle Materre, exec. dir., International Film Seminars, 462 Broadway, Ste. 510, New York, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax: (212) 925-3482; ifsnyc@aol.com.

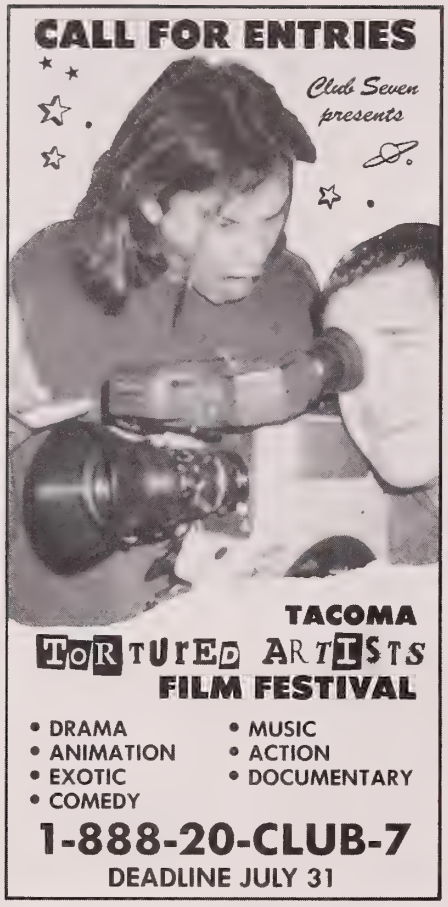


HOYT FULLER FILM FESTIVAL, late Oct., GA. Presented by Atlanta African Film Society, annual invitational fest premiering media that celebrates Black aesthetic while honoring producers who bring an appreciation of Black art, culture & creativity. Many Atlanta premieres. 1995 fest presented Prized Pieces film tour, film premieres & 5 films. Fest named for the late Hoyt W. Fuller, founder & publisher of *First World* magazine & editor of *Black World*. Formats: 16mm, 1/2". No entry fee. Deadline: early Aug. Contact: program dir., Hoyt Fuller Film Fest, Atlanta African Film Society, Box 50319, Atlanta, GA 30302; (404) 818-6444.

LOWER EAST SIDE FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., NY. Unreleased films by "talented young filmmakers" accepted for 1st annual edition of fest for ind. filmmakers; open to feature, doc, animation & exp work. Held at Synagogue Space, located in former synagogue on NYC's Lower East Side. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Lower East Side Film Fest, Synagogue Space, 108 E. 1st St., NY, NY 10009; (212) 802-9872;ilduce@panix.com; http://www.panix.com/~ilduce/.

MESILLA VALLEY FILM SOCIETY: This Place: Border Perspectives in Film and Video, Sept 20-23. 2nd annual fest of films & videos w/ themes relevant to "The Border" region, incl. Mexico & southwestern US & idea of "border" as barrier, margin, bridge or arbitrary line. Submission open to recently completed films & videos of all genres by ind. producers & students. Entry fee: $10, plus return postage. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4", Beta-SP; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Carol McCall, Mesilla Valley Film Society, Box 1139, Mesilla, NM 88046; (505) 647-3471.

MISSOURI VIDEO AND SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct 4-5, MO. Fest schedules all work entered & has expanded format to accept entries nationwide & include film as well as video. Cats: doc, narrative shorts, exp, animation, music video & special cats for students & MO residents (narrative features not accepted). All work should have been completed since summer 1994. Cash awards in each cat. Also seeking nominations for Wendy Hearn Invitational Video Award. Formats: 16mm, 8mm, Beta, 1/2"; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $25 per cat; $15 student.



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Deadline: July 31. Contact: Cindy Lazzari, Missouri Video & Short Film Fest, Midtown Arts Center, 3207 Washington Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103; (314) 531-2787.

NEW ORLEANS FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 11-20, LA. Now in 8th yr, fest features local premieres of major releases from around world, world-class film industry guests & seminars. Special emphasis on ind film works of artistic, cultural & educational value. 1995 incl. over 100 films. Films shown in 2 groups: The Big House, for 35mm, larger-budget features w/ distrib. & "Cinema 16" division, which hosts ind. film competition & shows works in all cats. Night of music videos also programmed. Latino Film Series, Oct. 18-20. All genres, styles, cats, lengths & formats considered; entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Awards: engraved lucite trophies. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Entry fee: $25 (late entry: $35 by Aug. 1). Deadline: July 22; Sept. 1 w/ $10 late fee. Contact: Carol Gniady, man. dir., New Orleans Film & Video Fest, Box 50819, New Orleans, LA 70150, (504) 523-3818, fax: (504) 581-1291.

NEW YORK FESTIVALS INTERNATIONAL NON-BROADCAST AWARDS, Jan., NY. Founded in '57, int'l competition encompasses wide range of media from "low-budget productions to multimedia extravaganza," incl. industrials, education & info, home video, short films, multi-image, business theater. Receives 1300 entries from 36 countries; awards presented at ceremony attended by 900. Competition cats: industrials, crafts, intros & lead-in titles, multi-image & slide prods, multi-image/film or video hybrid, business/industrial theater. Awards (in each competition cat): Grand Award "Best of Fest" Trophy; Gold, Silver & Bronze World Medals, Finalist Certificates of Recognition. Productions must have been produced &/or released after Aug. 3, 1995. In assoc. w/ Arden Media Resources, competition presents Gold Winners "Highlights Reel." Entry fees: $110-250, depending on cat. & length. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Multi-Image/Business Theater Prods must be submitted w/ presentation book. Deadline: Aug. 2. Contact: New York Festivals, 186 Fifth Ave, 7th fl., New York, NY 10010; (914) 238-4481; fax: 238-5040; http://www.nyfests.com.

NORTHERN LIGHTS INTERNATIONAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept., AK. Held in Anchorage, fest presents cinematic & video arts devoted to North & Arctic (traditions, history, cultures, religions, environment, wildlife). Competitive section offers cash prizes of $2,000 each & NLIFF Special Awards & NLIFF Certificates. Noncompetive section (public screenings & Audience Special Award) accepts films & videos w/o any geographical, theme, length, or genre limitations. Student works welcome. Cats: docs, narrative, experimental, animated, music. Formats: 16mm, Beta, VHS. Entry fee (competition only): $20 (independents & students) $40 others. Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Marina Moukhamedianova, director, 1001 Cordova St., Bld 2, #322, Anchorage, AK 99501; (907) 274-6962; fax: 277-7925.

NORTHWEST FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 1-10, OR. Now in 23rd ed., this is juried survey of new moving image art produced by film & videomakers living in OR, WA, ID, MT, AK & British Columbia. Fest draws over 250 entries each yr; 35-40 selected for public presentation as single programs or in context of group/thematic programs. Usually 7-10 programs of features, docs & shorts; single juror (filmmaker, critic or programmer; in 1996 it was John Cooper, Sundance programmer). Touring program of about 10-12 shows entries around N.W. Total auds estimated at 5,000. Awards: $8,000 in prizes; Best of Fest Award, Honorable Mentions. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. No subject cats; fest is "open to everything ind." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. No entry fee (return shipping costs: $10 first entry, $15 for 2). Deadline: Aug. 9. Contact: Lisa Pearson, coord., Northwest Film Center, 1219 Southwest Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205-2486, (503) 221-1156; fax: 226-4842.

PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., PA. Open to ind. video artists & filmmakers; top 4 jury chocies shown as part of fest & highest ranked film/video carries award of up to $500. Entries must be by, for or about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered people. All styles (narrative, doc, exp, alternative) accepted; particularly encouraged is work that "reflects the fest's commitment to multi-racial experiences of sexuality & to gender parity." Installations not considered. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $10 and SASE). Deadline: July 31. Contact: PILGFF Open Call, Box 110224, Pittsburgh, PA 15232; (412) 232-3277; rjst13@pitt.edu.

PXL THIS VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 14/Feb. 7, CA. Founded in '91, fest features videos produced using Fisher Price PXL 2000 (but not exclusively) & entered on VHS. PXL 2000 (or Pixelvision)is toy camera available from 1987-89 that records sound & images directly onto audio cassettes w/ result being very grainy quality. 2 public screenings in LA per fest, in Jan & 2nd in Feb. 2+ hr program spans many genres, incl. doc, poetry, exp, drama, comedy & music. Santa Monica video store Vidiots exclusively rents 2 PXL THIS fest highlights compilation. Formats: 1/2" (must use footage shot w/ PXL 2000). No entry fee. Deadline: late Aug. Contact: Gerry Fialka, organizer, PXL This Video Festival, Clap Off They Glass Productions, 2427 1/2 Glyndon Avenue, Venice, CA 90291; (310) 306-7330.

REELING '96: THE 16TH CHICAGO LESBIAN AND GAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 8-17, IL. Chicago Filmmakers seeks wide variety of lesbian & gay films & videos for the second oldest fest of its kind in the world. Fest, which screens at the Music Box Theater and at the Kino-Eye Cinema, offers great exposure as well as potential follow-up engagements at the Music Box Theater. All formats, genres and lengths accepted. Entry fee: $20. Deadline: July 15. REELING '96, Chicago Filmmakers, 1543 West Division, Chicago, IL 60622; fax: (312) 384-5532; chifilm@tezcat.com; http://www.tezcat.com/~chifilm/homepage.html.

SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY & HORROR SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., CA. Original works of 30 min. & under sought. Formats: 35mm,

16mm; preview on VHS only. Entry fee: $15 (must include SASE for return). Deadline: July 31. Contact: Syngenor, Box 192884, San Francisco, CA 94119-2884; (415) 664-0909.

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, late Sept., CA. Now in 7th yr, fest open showcase for short shorts. All entries must be noncommercial, 2 min. or less & completed w/in previous 2 yrs; no cats & no judges. Entries cover range of styles & genres, from animation, music video, political commentary, comedy, exp & narrative to "totally banal & truly grotesque." Best of Fest compilation made available for screening at galleries around U.S., as well as on Viacom Channel 25 in San Francisco, Weird TV & Artists' Television Access. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S 8; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $5. Deadline: mid-Aug. Contact: Elizabeth Hall, fest dir., Short Attention Span Film & Video Fest, Box 460316, San Francisco, CA 94146; (415) 282-4316; sasfvf@aol.com.

TACOMA TORTURED ARTISTS FILM FESTIVAL, Aug., WA. Nat'l competitive fest for ind. of all levels of experience. Broad cats (drama, music, exotic, comedy, action, animation, doc). Winners screened on video monitors during gala Second Best Fest evening to kick off fest. Entries may have originated on film or video, but must be submitted on VHS. Entry fee: $20-$50. Deadline: Late July. Contacat: Kristen Revis, producer/James Hume, director, Club Seven Studios, 728A Pacific Ave., Tacoma, WA 98402; (888) 20-CLUB7; fax: 627-1525; c7p@aol.com.

TAMPA INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY PRIDE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, early Oct., FL. Now in 7th yr, 10 day fest considers all genres of any length by, about & of interest to lesbians & gay men. Fest is "committed to presenting culturally inclusive & diverse programs" of video & film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Aug. Contact: Dorothy Abbott, Tampa Int'l Lesbian & Gay Pride Film & Video Fest, 5506 North Branch Ave., Tampa, FL 33604, (813) 237-0239; fax: 237-0239.

TROUBADOURS FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 12-19, CA. Now in 3rd yr, fest is showcase of film & video by ind. Christian producers & artists, or projects by others about Christian culture; aim is "to foster critique & evaluation of Christian media...Those that reflect diverse, unusual, paradoxic, alternative, experimental, funky, investigative, personal, unconventional, unique, extratraditional, instinctive, controversial, different & creative perspectives & works from producers/artists of all backgrounds, persuasions, orientations, political affiliations, races, genders & cultures." Projects by non-Christians that examine Christian culture also encouraged. Formats, 16mm, super 8, VHS. Entry fee: $20. Deadline: Aug. 31. Contact: Bret Lutz, Troubadours Fest, Cathedral X, Box 192845, San Francisco, CA 94119; (415) 863-5201; cathedralx@aol.com.

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FESTIVALS

FOREIGN

BAHIA FILM FESTIVAL, mid-Sept., Brazil. Por Um Mondo Mais Humano (For a More Humanistic World) is motto of fest & market, which marks 2rd ed. this yr. Open to Ibero-American prods as well as non-Iberoamerican prods on Latin Amer. subjects. Held in the Brazilian city "that best synthesizes the encounter of the Afro-Indian Iberian & American cultural inheritance." Program incl. film & video conquest, retros, symposia & exhibitions. Int'l jury awards TATU D'OURO prizes in following cats: film/video doc; film/video-fiction; film/video animation/exp; film/video made by non-Iberoamerican about Latin America; best feature doc film; best videoclip; best director; best script; best photography; best editing; best sound. Market takes place during fest; its objective is "to create an alternative space for commercialization & int'l distribution of exp & ind film & video prods." Entries must be on VHS w/ max length of 60 min. Market will disseminate promotional materials sent by participants. Deadline: late July (competition); mid-Aug. (market). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4,"1/2," Beta. Entry fee: $20 (market). Contact: Guida Araujo, dir./Diana Gurgel, co-dir., Jornada Internacional de Cinema da Bahia, Av. Araujo Pinho, 32, Salvador, Bahia CEP 40 170 000, Brazil; 011 55 71 235 4392 , fax: 011 55 71 336 9299.

BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF GAY AND LESBIAN FILMS, Oct. 28-Nov. 3, Spain. 1995 was debut yr of noncompetitive fest, one of 1st of its kind in Spain. Sections: Pink & Purple (current features), Homage (prize-winning films from various int'l fests), Special Screening (Centenary of the Birth of Cinema 1976 productions) & Stonewall (new Queer Cinema). All lengths considered. Audience Award, Best Short Film & Best Long Instructional. Screenings: Filmoteca de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government). Deadline: late Aug. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Xavier-Daniel, dir., Barcelona Int'l Exhibition of Gay & Lesbian Films, Mostra Internacional de Cinema Gai i Lesbic, Casal Lambda, Carrer Ample 5, 08002 Barcelona, Spain; 011 34 3 412 72 72, fax: 011 34 3 412 74 76.

BREST FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, Nov. 5-11, France. Open to all short films, provided entry is produced by EU country (Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Holland, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, UK, Sweden, Finland, Austria). Awards: Grand Prix of Brest European Short Film Festival; 1st Film Award; Audience Award; Best Actress/Actor Award. Max running time of 52 min., completed after 7/31. Approx 40 films accepted for competition & about 30 films incl. in "fringe" screenings outside competition. No entry fee. Deadline: Aug. 31. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Gilbert LeTraon/Mirabelle Fréville, artistic directors, Brest Festival of Short Films, Festival du Court Métrage de Brest, Association Cote Ouest, 40 bis, rue de la République, B.P. 173, 29269 Brest Cedex, France, 011 33 98 44 03 94, fax: 011 33 98 80 25 24.

BUENOS AIRES INTERNATIONAL VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 1-6, Argentina. Sponsored by Babilonia, private cultural institution, fest dedicated to showing & analyzing latest video & TV prods.

Fest, which debuted in '95, offers video competition (video art, clip & docs & artistic CD-ROM, computer graphics, Web projects) & programs videos from Argentina, rest of Latin America, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Spain), MoMA, Media Wave (East Europe) & Mexico. Also special sections of digital photography, music concerts, installations, Electronic Cafe, retros & workshops on new tendencies in art & media. Deadline: July 31. Formats: 3/4," Betacam. No entry fee. Contact: Carlos Trilnick, fest dir., FIV, Babilonia, Guardia Vieja 3360 (1192), Buenos Aires, Argentina, 011 541 862 0683, fax: 011 541 866-1337; babylon@einstein.com.ar.

CINANIMA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-10, Portugal. Espinho, small seaside city in northern Portugal, hosts this animated film event, now in 20th yr. Program comprises int'l competition & int'l noncompetitive program, which incl. retros. Eligible: all works directed "frame by frame" or computer-assisted for cinema & TV, in film or video, completed w/in preceding 2 yrs. Competition cats: a) up to 6 min.; b) 6-13 min.; c) 13-26 min.; d) 26-52 min.; e) long feature; f) publicity & institutional; g) 1st film; h) didactic & information; i) title sequences; j) series. Awards: Great Prize Cinanima (trophy, certificate & pta 500,000; about $3,200); Prize City of Espinho-Jury's Special Award (trophy, certificate & pta 250,000; about $1,600); Prize for Best Film in each cat (trophies & certificates); Honorable Mentions; Prize Alves Costa (awarded by journalists at fest); Prize José Abel (special trophy & certificate); audience prize. Deadline: Aug. 10. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2" VHS. No entry fee. Contact: fest dir., Cinanima Int'l Animated Film Festival, Festival Internacional de Cinema de Animacao, Secretariado do Festival, Apartado 43, 4501 Espinho Codex, Portugal; 011 351 2 724 611, fax: 011 351 2 726 015.

COPENHAGEN GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 13-19, Denmark. Major purpose of fest, a subdivision of Copenhagen Film Fest, is to show films that never get to Danish distributors because of gay/lesbian content. Fest began as very political event & is now focused on film-as-art, looking for films w/ high artistic & technical standards w/ interesting movie language. Noncompetitive fest founded in '86 annually showcases 20-25 films. Extensively covered in major newspapers, TV & radio. Deadline: early July. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". No entry fee. Contact: Jill Byruit, dir, Copenhagen Gay & Lesbian Film Fest, c/o Reel Pictures, Puggaardsgade 8, 1578 Copenhagen V. Denmark; tel/fax: 011 45 3314 0317.

EKOTOPFILM INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PROFESSIONAL FILMS, TELEVISION AND VIDEOPROGRAMMES, Nov. 4-8, Slovak Republic. Founded in '74, EKOTOPFILM showcases films, TV & videos that "will contribute to the extension of topical professional information & world-wide data bank of scientific & technical development & progress...in all branches of industrial & economic activities w/ impact on living environment." Content of entries should be focused on: a) topical issues of technical & technological development (industry, transport, power engineering, building industry); b) new technologies, new materials, new progressive solutions; c) general problems of living environment creation & protection; d) natural environment & relation of human activities to it; e) consequences of business activities on man & possible elimination of negative effects (living environment, health care, sanitary technique, safety at work, agriculture, forestry, management of water supplies); f) search for more profound harmony btwn man & nature; g) nature conservation. Titles produced in previous 2 yrs eligible for intl' contest. Cats incl. popularizing scientific issues; educational & instructive issues; publicity; videoclips & advertising; doc; children's. Awards: Grand Prize of EKOTOPFILM; 6 prizes in respective cats; Prize of Int'l Jury; Prize of Fest Director; prizes for artistic creativity & more. Deadline: mid-Aug. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," super VHS, VHS, Beta. No entry fee. Contact: Dipl. Ing. Pavol L I M, dir., EKOTOPFILM Int'l Festival of Professional Films, Television & Videoprogrammes, EKOTOPFILM Medzinárodny Festival Odbornych Filmov, TV a Videoprogramov, EKOTOPFILM Secretariat, P.O. Box 51, 820 12 Bratislava 212, Slovak Republic; 011 42 7 237421, fax: 011 42 7 293614.

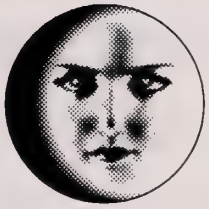
HOMO IN AMERICA Internationales Schwul-Lesbishes Film Festival Berlin, Nov. 6-11, Germany. New productions (completed w/in previous 2 yrs) that have not been screened in Berlin prior to Berlin Int'l Lesbian & Gay Film Fest eligible. Pride & Prejudice theme of 4th edition. Send VHS preview tapes only. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Douglas Conrad, Homo in America, 584 Castro St., #123, San Francisco, CA 94114; tel/fax: (415) 648-5579. For entry forms to 4th Internationales Schwul-Lesbiches Filmfestival Berlin, send SASE to Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl, San Francisco, CA 94103, or contact: 4th Internationales SchwulLesbisches Filmfestival Berliln, c/o Barbara Weiler, Immanuelkirchstr. 2, D 10404 Berlin, Germany; tel/fax: 011 49 30 4442 98 91.

ICRONOS INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FILM, late Oct., France. Founded in '88, this biennial fest of recent films on archaeology is held in Bordeaux, France. This yr's theme is Asia Minor. 1 monetary prize (limitations on eligibility); 3 principal jury prizes, incl. one for best film about scientific methods applied to archaeology; 6 other jury prizes; 1 aud. prize. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: late Aug. Contact: Philippe Dorthe, president, Icronos Int'l Week of Archaeological Film, Icronos Semaine du Film Archéologique, Association du Festival Int'l du Film Archéologique (AFIFA), 5, rue Pascal-Lafargue, 33300 Bordeaux, France; 011 33 56 39 41 96, fax: 011 33 56 39 29 66.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ADVENTURE DOCUMENTARIES, late Sept., France. Held in Dijon, fest is showcase for recent docs relating to adventure: polar expeditions, mountaineering, global sailing races, ballooning, underwater exploration, speleology, etc. Awards: Toison d'Or for Best Documentary Film; Toison d'Or for Best Adventurer; Special Prize; Jean-Marc Boivin Prize for genuineness & ethical dimension of adventure; Press Prize; Children's Prize; special mentions. Entries must have

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been completed w/in 2 yrs prior to fest; priority to French premieres. Fest will pay Paris/Dijon/Paris travel, hotel & meals for producers, directors or distributors associated w/ selected films (max of 2). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP (PAL); preview on 3/4," 1/2" PAL. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Aug. Contact: Philippe Cezard, head of program, Int'l Fest of Adventure Documentaries, Les Ecrans de L'Aventure, Guilde Européene du Raide, 11 rue de Vaugirard, 75006 Paris, France; 011 33 1 43 26 97 52, fax: 011 33 1 46 34 75 45.

LEEDS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 10-25, UK. Central theme runs through each edition of 16-day fest, now in 10th yr, which features premieres, shorts, animations & docs. Each yr about 95 features & 25 shorts exhibited. Fest also features strong educ. content w/ seminars, workshops & lectures. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, broadcast-quality video. No entry fee. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Liz Rymer, dir., Leeds Int'l Film Fest, Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds, LS1 3AD, United Kingdom; 011 00 44 113 247 8389; fax: 011 00 44 113 247 8397.

LONDON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 7-24, UK. The London Film Festival, run continuously since 1957, is largest noncompetitive & invitational film fest in Europe. For several yrs, it has programmed one of Europe's largest forums of U.S. ind prods. Overall, 180 int'l features & short film showcase of 100 shorts. 40th edition incl. special event, "Splicing the Film Together," which will consolidate its promotion of US indies by inviting British & US ind. filmmakers developing projects to attend 2-day event. Sections incl. Shorts & Animation, British Cinema Now, Panorama France, Evening Standard "Film on the Square," European Cinema, World Cinema. Screenings held at Nat'l Film Theatre, Museum of the Moving Image, Odeon West End & ICA Cinema. Nearly 1,000 filmmakers, buyers & media attend & there is an Industry Office. Extensive media coverage 2nd only to competitive fests in Europe. Audiences over 100,000. Entries must be UK premieres produced w/in preceding 2 yrs. Fiction & doc works of all lengths & genres accepted. Send info (incl synopsis & press kit) only to fest; preview cassettes will be requested. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", super 8, 8mm. No entry fee. Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Jane Ivey, administrator, London Int'l Film Festival, Nat'l Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, United Kingdom; 011 44 171 815 1322; fax: 011 44 171 633 0786; jane.ivey@bfi.org.uk.

MANNHEIM-HEIDELBERG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 11-19, Germany. Founded in '52, this is one of oldest German fests. In 1994, Heidelberg became the new partner of Mannheim & fest films are screened in both cities. Well-known forum for inds & springboard for newcomers. Approx. 25 films in Int'l Competition; features, docs & shorts compete for Int'l Independent Award in cats of Best Feature Film (DM30,000), Best Documentary (DM10,000, 30+ min.), Best Short (DM5,000) max length 30 min., Special Prize in Memoriam Rainer Werner Fassbinder (DM10,000 for film with most unique narrative structure & 60 + min.) & Special Award of the Jury (DM5,000). Other awards incl. Audience Prize of Mannheim-Heidelberg, Fipresci Award, Ecumenical Jury Award.

Other sections: International Highlights (outstanding prods of previous yr), SchauPlatz (focus on certain aspects of filmmaking); New Turkish Cinema, Children's Cinema. Newly added in 1995 is distribution grant of DM35,000 to German distributor to promote release of 1 award-winning film. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr, not screened publicly in German cinemas or broadcast on German TV before fest & not participated in official program of certain other Euro fests. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Dr. Michael Koetz, Mannheim-Heidelberg Int'l Film Festival, Internationales Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg Collini-Center-Galerie, D-68161 Mannheim 1, Germany; 011 49 621 10 29 43; fax: 011 49 621 29 15 64.

RAINDANCE FILM SHOWCASE, Oct. 19-25, UK. Now in 4th ed., this is only fest & market for int'l independent film in England, held in London's West End week before MIFED. Market/fest presents British film industry w/ first look at ind. films in sections incl. Feature Films, Directors Reel (work in progress) Script Catalogue, Multimedia Showcase. Contact: Elliot Grove, Raindance Film Showcase & Market, 81 Berwick St., London W1V 3PF, United Kingdom; 011 44 171 287 3833; fax: 011 44 171 439 2243.

SAN JUAN CINEMAFEST, Oct. 3-13, Puerto Rico. Founded in '88, fest aim is to be meeting place for Caribbean filmmakers & int'l peers. 2 major sections: Caribbean Competition & World Cinema Section. Caribbean Competition accepts both film & video & int'l jury awards Pitirre Prize (local bird on wood by an artisan) in cats of fiction, doc & animation as well as best film by non-Caribbean on Caribbean subject. World Cinema Section has premiered major int'l films. Film & video entries must be less than 2 yrs old, except in case of retros or special programs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. No entry fee. Deadline: late Aug. Contact: José Artemio Torres, exec. dir., San Juan Cinemafest, Box 4543, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00905, (809) 721-6125, fax: 723-6412.

TURIN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF YOUNG CINEMA (CINEMA GIOVANI), Nov. 15-23, Italy. Now celebrating 14th ed., fest is excellent competitive showcase for new, young directors & filmmaking trends. Held in northern Italy's Piedmont region. Sections: Int'l Competition for Feature Films (35mm & 16mm Italian premieres by young filmmakers completed after Sept. 1 of preceding yr); Int'l Short Film competition (up to 30 min.); Noncompetitive Section (features & docs); important premieres & works by jury members. Italian Space Competition (35mm, 16mm & videos) accepts works by Italian directors. Turin Space accepts films & video by directors born or living in Piedmont region. Fest also features retros. Fest does not accept in competition any films already shown in competition at Cannes, Berlin, Locarno & all other Italian fests. Awards: Int'l Feature Films Competition: 1st Prize: 20 million lire; 2 special jury awards of 5 million lire each; Int'l Short Films Competition: 1st Prize, 4 million lire; 2nd Prize 3 million lire; 3rd Prize 2 million lire. Italian Space Competition: 1st Prize 10 million lire in technical services & film; 2nd Prize, 2 million lire; 3rd Prize 1 million lire. Turin Space Competition: 1st Prize 2

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Austin Film Festival
Film Competition

The Austin Film Festival is now accepting entries for its 1996 film competition in the following formats: 8mm, 16mm, 35mm.

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Since winning the Festival's '95 feature length competition, "The Man With the Perfect Swing" has signed a distribution agreement with Monarch Home Video, a division of Ingram Entertainment. '95 Judges included representatives from: BRAVO, HBO, Tri-Mark, & ICM.

austin film festival

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million lire; 2nd Prize 1 million lire; 3rd Prize 500,000 million lire. Local & foreign auds approach 45,000, with 25 nations represented & over 250 journalists accredited. About 300 films shown. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 31 (short competition), Sept. 30 (features). U.S. contact: Michael Solomon, Cross Productions, 247 Centre St., 2nd fl., New York, NY 10013; (212) 226-6474; fax: 226-6721; sparkle@ inch.com. $15 entry fee, payable to Cross Productions. Contact: Alberto Barbera, dir., Turin Int'l Festival of Young Cinema (Cinema Giovani), Festival Internazionale Cinema Giovani, Piazza San Carlo, 161, 10123 Torino, Italy; 011 39 11 5623309; fax: 011 39 11 5629796; http://www.webcom. com/~ficg.

UPPSALA FILM FESTIVAL, late Oct., Sweden. Located north of Stockholm in university town, fest, estab in '82, programs int'l docs & shorts (around 100) & children & youth films. Competition cats incl. short fiction films (max 20 min.; 20-60 min.), animation (max 60 min.), doc (max 60 min.), exp (max 60 min.) & children/young people's films (max 60 min.). Awards in children's cat decided by special children's jury & "audience choice" award. Films on all subjects welcomed, amateur & professional. Entries must be under 60 min., produced no more than 2 yrs prior to fest & not broadcast or commercially screened in Sweden. 6 films awarded w/ Uppsala Filmkaja, w/ awards going to best young creative talent, best maker of children's film & best short film director. Program also incls retros, exhibits & seminars. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: early Aug. Contact: Magdalena Dubiel, Uppsala Film Fest, Box 1746, S-75147 Uppsala, Sweden; 011 46 181 20025, fax: 011 46 181 21350.

VIENNALE - VIENNA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, mid-Oct., Austria. A "fest of fests," FIAPF-recognized noncompetitive Viennale introduces local auds to major films of annual fest circuit. It is fest "in praise of ind politics & visions," emphasizing films off beaten track. Large retro every yr concentrates on overlooked subjects, such as emigration of Austrian filmmakers to Hollywood (1993). In 1995, Viennale Special focused on "film & music." In addition to main program, sections incl. Documentaries, Twilight Zone ("Midnight Movies"), Lost & Found (recently discovered or very rare films), 2 tributes to directors. Entries should not have been shown as 1st run films in Austria. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Aug. Contact: Alexander Horwath, dir., Viennale-Internationale Filmfestwochen Wien, Stiftgasse 6, A-1070 Vienna, Austria; 011 43 1 52 65 947, fax: 011 43 1 52 34 172.

Errata

Dallas Video Festival

The June festival column printed outdated information on the Dallas Video Festival. The festival is held in January with a September 20 deadline for applications. The correct contact information follows: Dallas Video Festival, 1405 Woodlawn Ave., Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 948-7300; fax: 943-1776; bart@onramp.net. A complete listing will appear in the Aug./Sept. issue.

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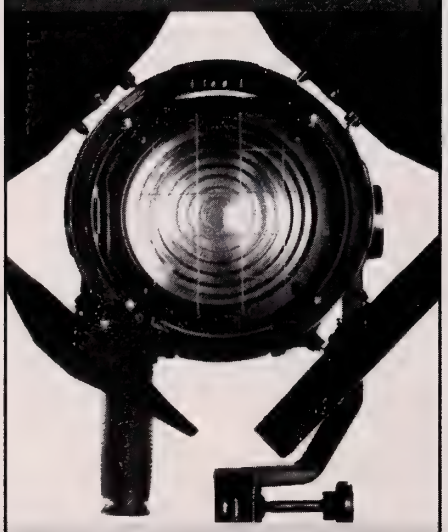
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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, experienced, w/ Arri 16 SR & Aaton S-16 pkgs, plus Mole Richardson lighting pkg, seeks interesting film projects in feature or short-subject form. Very reasonable rates for new directors & screenwriters. (212) 737-6815; fax 423-1125.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY looking for interesting features, shorts, ind. projects, etc. Credits include features, commercials, industrials, short films, music videos. Aaton 16/S-16 pkg avail. Call Abe (914) 783-3159.

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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ awards, talent & experience. Credits incl. features, commercials, industrials, docs, shorts & music videos. Owner of Aaton 16mm/S-16 pkg. 35mm pkg also avail. Call for my reel. Bob (212) 741-2189.

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ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: Frequent contributor to "Legal Briefs" column in *The Independent* & other magazines, offers legal services to film & video community on projects from development to distribution. Reasonable rates. Contact: Robert L. Seigel, Esq. (212) 307-7533.

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Opportunities • Gigs

FILM CREW TRAINEES NEEDED. Ground flr oppt'y. Atlanta area prod. assistants &/or knowledgeable persons, send résumé or call Cliff Lyttle for interview. Mecca Motion Picture Corp., 1100

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NEED TO RAISE MONEY for your film? Try new marketing plan. Send SASE for free information: J. Film, 312 Dover Ave., Charlotte, NC 28209.

RUSSIA, CIS & E. EUROPE: Stretch your budget! US company in Moscow w/ contacts everywhere provides location scouting & prod. services. Fax: 011-7-095-216-8162 or moscinema@glas.apc.org. Member AIVF & IDA.

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16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUND TRACKS! If you want "High Quality" sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" sound negative. Contact Mike Holloway, Optical Sound/Chicago Inc., 24 W. Erie, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 943-1771 or (847) 541-8488.

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Competitions

ATHENA AWARDS FOR LESBIAN EXCELLENCE IN FILM, VIDEO & TELEVISION, sponsored by Northern Arts/The Naiad Press, honors exceptional works by &/or about lesbians & lesbian issues. Competition awards thousands of dollars worth of prizes from film/video labs. Features, shorts, doc, experimental, animation & all forms of television programs accepted. Submission format: VHS-NTSC only. Entry fee: $25. Deadline: July 10. Awards announced August 15. For entry form send SASE to Awards Coordinator, Athena Awards, Box 201, Williamsburg, MA 01096; (413) 268-9301, fax 268-9309.

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST accepting scripts. 5 to 6 winners will be chosen to receive $500 cash award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: Ongoing. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop National Contest, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

Conferences • Workshops

ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA (ACM) addresses problems faced by public access & community TV directors & staffs nationwide at its National Conference, July 17-20 in Washington, D.C. ACM National Office: (202) 393-2650.

CAMCORDER FOR BROADCAST TV. Workshop for all skill levels, 7/29-8/2 at Univ. of Hawaii Film/Video Institute. Instructor Skip Blumburg produces for *The 90's*, *National Geographic TV*, Sci-Fi Channel, *Sesame Street*. Contact (808) 956-3422 or www.summer.hawaii.edu.

CONFERENCE will be held Aug. 6-10 at Chapman Univ., Orange, CA. Traditional academic paper presentations plus workshops in hands-on digital editing, lighting, audio for film/video & scriptwriting. Critic screenings of members' work & premier screening of winners of the 1996 UFVA Student Film & Video Festival. Contact Bob Bassett (714) 997-6765; http://www.chapman.edu/comm/ ftv/ufva.html.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation and Tax Exemption," & more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

Films • Tapes Wanted

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX, ind. producer offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in series of 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, a Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, is accepting all genres, under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172, wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu, WWW: http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia & Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For more info contact Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

CHARISMATIC MASS TELEVISION seeks media art shorts for new monthly screening series. All genres accepted, any length. Ongoing deadline. Send artist statement, videotape & SASE. 3/4" preferred, Hi8 or 1/2" OK; returnable w/ SASE. Syracuse University, Art Media Studies, attn: Justine Wood, 102 Shaffer Art Bldg., Syracuse, NY 13244.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for *Spirit of Dance*, live 1-hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645; (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel Univ., 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

FROG PRODUCTIONS seeks student/ind. fims & videos for cable access TV show. Any length/genre, VHS preferred, 1/2" or 3/4" acceptable. Include info about work/artist. SASE if return desired. Fred W. DeVecca, Frog Prods, Box 158, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.



GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for *Living With AIDS*, a half-hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, Living with AIDS Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8 min.) videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone # to: *In the Mix*, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

IND. FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, cable access show seeks student & ind. films & videos to give exposure. Send 3/4" format w/ paragraph about artist & work. The Independent Film & Video Showcase, 6755 Yucca St., #8, Hollywood, CA 90028, attn: Jerry Salata.

THE KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to Knitting Factory Video Lounge, c/o Joanna Spitzner, PO Box 1220, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. If tape return desired, include self-addressed envelope w/ sufficient postage.

NEW DAY FILMS, the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. (914) 485-8489.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS, series broadcasting selected works statewide on public TV, seeks works of any genre (except corporate/instructional) produced by ind. artists currently residing in NC. Modest monetary compensation & telecast filmmaker interview of artist for works selected. Entry fee: $15 for individuals, $5 for students & NC Media Arts Alliance members; separate fee for each submission. Contact Ellen Walters, NC Visions, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg., UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax 5039; ncvision@hamlet.uncg.edu.

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OH, showcases ind. video (art, doc, experimental). Send Hi8, VHS, or 3/4" dub to: *Ocular Arcade*, D. Master, 135 West 1st Ave., Columbus, OH 43201.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/ Williamsburg area of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Please call or send SASE for info: OCULARIS, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

PROGRESSIVE PROPOGANDA seeks films/ videos which counter right-wing representations & ideologies for a screening at Art in General in NYC in Oct. '96. No entry fee. Deadline: Aug.15. Preference to short new work (3-5 min). Send VHS tapes for preview & SASE for return w/ name, address, phone, description & running time to *Progressive Propaganda*, c/o Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013.

SAN FRANCISCO SHORT FILMS, a new organization dedicated to supporting the short narrative film as an unique art form, seeks films under 35 min. for screening programs. Filmmaker must be resident of 415, 510, 408, 707, 916, or 209 area codes in Northern CA. Films must have been completed on or after Jan. 1, 1993. All formats OK, but submit preview in VHS to Box 424520, San Francisco, CA 94142. Submissions can also be brought to monthly meeting, first Thursday each month, 7 pm, at Colossal Studios, 15th St. & DeHaro.

SEEKING FOOTAGE ON CUBA for upcoming doc. Every aspect of life in the island welcome. Formats: Hi8, SVHS, 3/4", Beta, DVD, 8mm & 16mm. Tapes returned. Payment negotiable. For more info, please contact TV-1 Productions, Marcos N. Suarez, 2102 Empire Central, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 357-2186.

SEEKING WORKS by ind. filmmakers. 16mm, 8mm & video for screening series in downtown Manhattan. Send VHS copy to Leslie Napoles, c/o CRC, 7th fl., 435 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast. Submit to: EDGE TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED for exhibitions/screenings & collection of essays considering the relationships between Middle East & the West on personal or geo-political scale. Will be looking at crises of identity, nationalisms/borders, naming, gender/sexuality, class & exoticization of difference. Send documentation of work in any medium, w/ postage if return requested: Public Domain, 186 Avenue B, #5, New York, NY 10009; ph/fax (212) 982-8967.

SUDDEN MEDIA FESTIVAL seeks student videos & films. Open categories. Work must have been completed during undergrad. or grad. study only. Max. length: 15 min., no limit for # of entries but each entry must be on a separate tape. Send VHS preview copy, 50 wd. synopsis, bio, B/W photo, SASE, & $15 entry fee per title. 3/4" copy must be made available for program master. Send no fiber-fill envelopes. Deadline: Sept. 1, 1996. Sudden Media, Hartford Art School, Univ. of Hartford, West Hartford, CT 06117.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA seeks VHS submissions, any style, content or length, for Student Union Gallery video installation, "Today's Special: Video Diner" in Oct. 1996. Forum for alternative videos for dialogue on a variety of issues. Send VHS, résumé, brief statement/description & SASE for tape return to: Vikki Dempsey, coordinator, Box 454, Tucson, AZ 85702; (502) 884-1354.

UNQUOTE TV, 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing new, innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, experimental, performance works under 28 min. Seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote TV*, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hour weekly show, w/ videos followed by information on the makers. Send VHS or SVHS to *World of Insanity*, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

PUBLICATIONS

AEIOU.2 (ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION INFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE) provides descriptions & submission information on over 220 exhibition venues, nat'l & int'l, showing challenging, alternative ind. film & video. Avail. for $7 (incl. addressed mailing label) from AEIOU.2, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, a computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 9577.

DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH GRANTS 1996, providing current info on nearly 6,000

funding sources, is now available. 1,224 pp. $135 plus 10% for shipping & handling, as well as sales tax in AZ & CA. To order, contact The Oryx Press, 4041 North Central Ave., ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; (800) 279-6799.

G. K. HALL & CO. announces publication of *Index to American Photographic Collections, 3rd Enlarged Ed.*, edited by Andrew Eskind. New edition locates work of more than 65,000 photographers in 585 collections, as well as new computerized photo info. 1,024 pp. $195. For info: (212) 654-8452; To order: (800) 223-2336, or Order Dept., Simon & Schuster, 200 Old Tappan Rd., Old Tappan, NJ 07675.

IFFCON '96 TRANSCRIPTS now available. Topics discussed by financiers, commissioning editors & producers during the 3rd Annual Int'l Film Financing Conference included foreign TV opportunitites, int'l distribution, rallying US dollars, navigating European film funds. For a copy, send $36 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at http://www.mediaalliance.org.

MEDIANET: A Guide to the Internet for Video and Filmmakers. Available free at http://www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or e-mail rriddle@infi.net.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION offers *History for Hire: Using Cultural Resources as Film Locations*, an ongoing series illustrating the benefits & drawbacks of film prods in museums, private residencies & along historic streets. $6 per issue; 10+ copies at $3 plus shipping & handling. Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 673-4286.

SHORT VIDEO MOVIES: To finish our handbook on the short video prod. process, we want to include your experiences w/ improvised scenarios or scripts, non-professionals or pros. Let's trade reels. Contact David Shepherd, Group Creativity, 2 Washington Sq. Vill. #70, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-7830.

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LESBIAN & GAY FILM & VIDEO, edited by Jenni Olson, is just out from Serpent's Tail publishers. Features more than 2000 catalog entries, complemented w/ extensive film stills, short essays on gay & lesbian films, a distributor & subject index, a chapter on how to organize your own film/video festival, a directory of international gay & lesbian film festivals, a bibliography & a filmmakers' top 10 survey. Serpent's Tail, 180 Varick, 10 fl., NY, NY 10014; (212) 741-8500.

Resources • Funds

APERTURE INC., a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers grant of $10,000 to first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. For info on 1996 Aperture Grant, send SASE to Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

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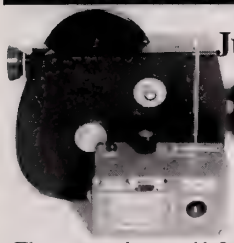
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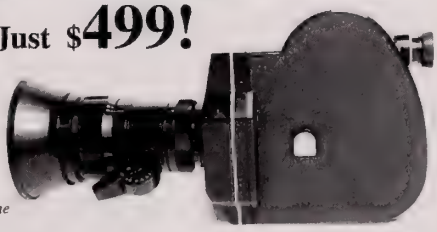
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CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propoganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants (generally $20,000-$30,000) for prod/completion of original films & videos that interpret Jewish experience & concerns to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be US citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress that address critical issues, combine artistry & intellectual clarity, can be completed w/in 1 yr of award & have broadcast potential. Appl.: National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 Seventh Ave., 21 Fl., NY, NY 10001. (212) 629-0500, x205. Deadline: Aug. 9, 1996.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION offers awards from $10,000-$350,000 to support various stages of ind. film & video production & script development. Proposals should bring original, challenging Asian American stories to the public airwaves. Janice Sakamoto, NAATA, 346 9th St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814, Fax: (415) 863-7428.

ON TRACK VIDEO, a leading New York-based postproduction facility, announces a new interactive question & answer Worldwide Web site offering video postprod. help & advice to industry professionals: http://www.otv.com.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI

96814; (808) 591-0059; fax 1114; e-mail: piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr: $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

REAL TV is looking for dynamic video: News, Weather, Sports, Bloopers, Busts, "Caught in the Act." *Real TV*, a syndicated daily video magazine, will showcase compelling video from around the world-from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the '90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact *Real TV*, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center (ETC) is accepting appls. Program offers opportunity to study the techniques of video image in intensive 5-day residency program. Artists work on variety of cutting edge & hi-tech equipment. Program open to experienced video artists. Appls must incl. résumé & project description, as well as videotape of recent work (if you are a first time applicant), either 3/4" or VHS formats, w/ SASE for return. Deadline: July 15, 1996. Write: ETC Ltd., 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

STANDBY PROGRAM is a nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to providing artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post-prod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: The Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER is dedicated to educators interested in using video technology as a learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

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For membership information, news from the AIVF salons, and advocacy updates, visit our new Web site at:

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You can also visit AIVF's America OnLine niche under:

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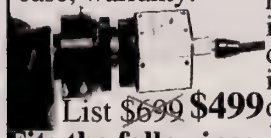


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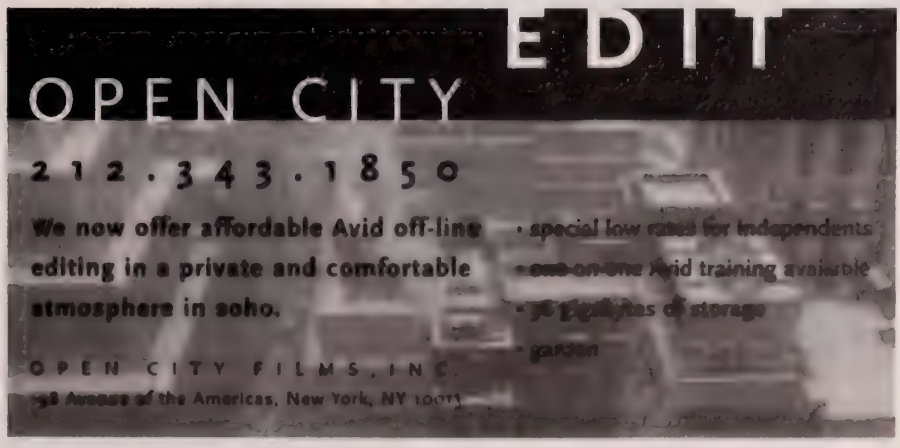
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Deadline: August 15. Send synopsis, contact info, photos, etc. to: In & Out—Pacific NW, *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., NY., NY 10013.

eX

ROUNDTABLE

ROUNDTABLE *continued from page 17*

Seid: To me there are two kinds of established artists: critically established, like, say, an Ernie Gehr, and successful, like people who are given big museum shows and are being supported by commissions. Everybody respects Ernie Gehr's work and he has enormous critical acceptance, but he may have to fight for every penny to make his next film.

Soe: I guess you could say that in the last ten years a lot of people have been used to suckling at the public teat—getting a lot of grants or getting enough grants to make their work, and now there are not as many grants, not as many jobs, not as much of anything. So all of a sudden it's like, "Oh my god, everybody before us got money, why aren't we getting any money?" or "Oh my god, I got money to make my last piece and now there is no money." It's a weird thing to have to go backwards or to scramble after being, not spoiled but....

Silverfine: Maybe encouraged.

Soe: Yeah. You know you don't want to go backwards when you are old.

Ind: What about building new audiences?

Silva: One of the things Film Arts is thinking about is trying to put an exhibition component with our seminars, so the people taking the seminars are also looking at work. We are trying to get the departments to work together, and maybe we will get more people looking at film, too.

Seid: I had at one point thought about creating a package of experimental works, going to high schools, and offering these video appreciation moments for students, so they could see that there was something beyond the Cineplex, that there are other ways of looking at work.

Literally trying to plant the first seeds to generate a new audience.

Soe: I work with younger kids, and whenever I show them stuff that is experimental, they're amazed. You know, "Where can I see this stuff when I go back home to Vallejo or Salinas?" or wherever. I wonder if it's not just the distribution network that needs to be set up. I mean, music has its little college radio network set up around the country, and that's where groups like Nirvana started out and now they're famous. They're defining the medium.

Seid: They're dead (laughter).

Soe: Actually Washington State just commissioned a video art series to go to K through 12.

Silva: There is an interesting program that's been going on for a number of years between the San Francisco school district and the San Francisco International Film Festival. They have film- and videomakers who have work in the festival—a lot of which is short experimental work or short personal work—go out into the schools and show the work and talk to students. It's been very interesting for the film- and videomakers to do this. They thought the response has been very good.

Seid: Parallel to that is someplace like Total Mobile Home. The beauty of a place like that is it's completely idiosyncratic, curated from very personal subjective needs. When you go there, you feel you're in the midst of a very specifically designed environment, rather than an institutional indifference. So intensity of the experience for experimental works in particular is really exotic in a place like that. That has effects far beyond it, even though it begins with the 20 people who cram themselves into a room.

George Fifield (gwf@tiac.net) is a video arrtist, adjunct curator at the DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park, and director of VideoSpace, an alternative media arts organization in Boston.

The Independent *would like to thank Julian Low and the staff at NAMAC for their help and hospitality.*



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MEMORANDA: cont'd from p. 64

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Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Border Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie St.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Houston, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: David Mendel, (713) 529-4185

Kansas City, MO:
When: 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Los Angeles, CA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Pat Branch, (310) 289-8612

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

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MEMORANDA

MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) met in New York on April 27-28, 1996. Attending were Robb Moss (chair), Debra Zimmerman (president), Loni Ding (vice president), Bart Weiss (vice president), Robert Richter (treasurer), Melissa Burch, Carroll Blue, James Klein, Diane Markrow, Susan Wittenberg, and Ruby Lerner (ex officio). Absent were James Schamus and Norman Wang.

New board member Carroll Blue was introduced; as first alternate, she replaces Joe Berlinger and will fill out his term expiring 1997.

Director of programs and services Pamela Calvert reported that a new staff member, Oscar Cervera, had been hired to handle database projects.

Various working groups of the board drafted updates to the three-year plan, with one group outlining ambitious development of the AIVF/FIVF site on the World Wide Web.

Resource/development director Ellen Barker reported on new initiatives in donor cultivation and education. *Independent* editor Patricia Thomson introduced new managing editor Dana Harris. Thomson discussed plans for a readership survey.

Advocacy coordinator Cleo Cacoulidis reported on the previous week's Advocacy Forum. The coming year's advocacy efforts will focus on the new telecommunications bill and the effort to get out the vote for the 1996 elections.

Moss initiated discussion of the current election schedule, expressing concern at the length of the process and that summer balloting effectively disenfranchises student members. The board concurred; effective 1997, there will be a two-month nominations period followed by a fall balloting, with a final count in December. Board terms will begin with the January meeting as of 1998.

Ding reported on the First Seoul Documentary Video and Film Festival, held earlier in the spring. Ding noted that all programming is subject to close scrutiny from censors and that the organization needs a statement of support for free expression from AIVF; the advocacy committee agreed to draft and send such a statement.

Zimmerman reported on the Bay Area Video Coalition conference on video preservation. Several staff and board members presented their views on the March NAMAC Conference in Berkeley. Lerner reported on the Media and Democracy Congress, which brought together electronic and print media representatives, activists, entrepreneurs, and funders. Members of the media contingent initiated plans at the conference for a national series of community discussions about re-visioning television and the media. AIVF has been invited to take an active role in helping plan a follow-up event, tentatively scheduled for fall 1997 in New York.

Treasurer Robert Richter reported that amended income projections for the current fiscal year are $90,000 lower than originally budgeted. As a consequence, staff raises were postponed. Lerner noted that FY96 was very unusual, with high one-time expenses for the office move and publishing the books. Book income will increase in FY97. Lerner said that while the current year's performance had been disappointing in some ways, the overall picture was unusually healthy for a non-profit media organization in these times, and continues to improve from our situation of a few years ago.

Kirk Wong of N. Cheng Associates reviewed the audited financial statements for AIVF/FIVF for FY95. The board expressed their appreciation to Zimmerman for her assistance with the audit.

The next board meeting is scheduled to take place June 22-23, 1996.

MEMORANDA



"Scriptware is the best!" Syd Field, *Screenplay*

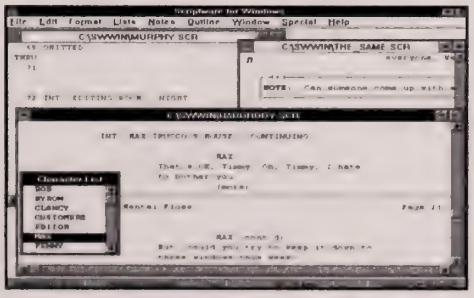
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BY PAMELA CALVERT

WELCOME NEW STAFF

A hearty welcome to *The Independent*'s new managing editor, **Dana Harris**, who joined the staff in April. Readers of the magazine will recognize Dana's byline from her articles in past issues of the magazine, including pieces on *Girls Town*, the Sundance Film Festival, and New York Expo of Short Films' director Robert Withers.

We also have big changes to announce in the area of information and membership services; as many readers will recall, we are in the midst of an ambitious project to develop comprehensive database resources, supported by our Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. We welcome new Membership/Systems Associate **Oscar Cervera** to the staff to implement the first major step of this project: a retooling of our membership database. We intend to expand the information to include data on members' *work* and *skills*, so that we can get a clear picture of our constituency and provide responsive programs and services. Oscar comes to us from the Center for Communication Resources in Chicago, where he developed a very similar project to the one we're now embarked on. In addition to putting the new database together, Oscar will be responsible for maintaining the current records and processing new and renewed memberships and mailing list rentals; his number is (212) 807-1400 x 236.

We take this opportunity to thank **Judah Friedlander**, our membership associate for the past three years, who served with unflappable good humor and a constant willingness to go the extra mile for the organization and its members.

DISCOUNTS TO THE NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL

There are big changes planned for the fifth New York Video Festival, presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center at the Walter Reade Theater. For the first time, the video festival will be held during the summer rather than as a featured sidebar of its elder sibling, the New York Film Festival; the 1996 dates are Friday, July 26 through Sunday, August 4.

AIVF members presenting a valid membership card will receive discounted admission to all NYVF screenings. This year's festival highlights include new work by Tom Kalin, Van McElwee, Sadie Benning, and Lynn Hershman, among many others. For a full program and advance sales information, please call the Film Society at (212) 875-5601.

VOTE!

The AIVF board is entirely elected by the membership, and sets policy and priorities for the organization. There are many excellent candidates running for the four open seats this year; members will shortly be getting ballots in the mail, and we urge you to participate in deciding who will best represent your interests.

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

We add new resources to the library each month. Here's the most recent additions:

The Complete Guide to American Film Schools by Ernest Pintoff: This guide lists 639 undergraduate and graduate schools in the U.S. that offer programs in cinema and television. Information is included regarding curricular emphasis, facilities and equipment, special activities, degrees offered, and the strengths of individual schools, as well as a glossary of technical terms. The *Guide* also contains advice on how to get the most out of film school from well-known feature film directors and writers, as well as from current students and recent graduates.



Finding the Grassroots: A Directory of New York City Activist Organizations: Published by the North Star Fund, this newly-issued compendium lists activist organizations working across the spectrum from AIDS to worker's rights issues. The *Directory* will be invaluable to makers of progressive social change media, helping them to identify community-based organizations who can put their work to use.

FIVF FESTIVAL GUIDE ERRATA & UPDATES

Barcelona Festival of Independent Video
tel: 011 34 3 41 20781
fax: 011 34 3 41 20520

Boston Jewish Film Festival
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Cambridge, MA 02139
tel: 617 441 3355
fax: 617 441 6347

Denver International Film Festival
1430 Lorimer Sq. #201
Denver, CO 80202
tel: (303) **595-3456**
fax: (303) **595-0596**

Drambuie Edinburgh Film Festival
tel: 011 44 131 228 4051
fax: 011 44 131 229 5501

Flanders-Ghent International Film Festival
tel: 011 32 9 221 89 46
fax: 011 32 9 221 90 74
email: filmfestival@inforboard.be

Hong Kong International Film Festival
tel: 011 852 2734 2901

Leipzig International Festival for Documentary and Animated Films
tel: 011 49 341 980 3921
fax: 011 49 341 980 4828

Locarno International Film Festival
tel: 011 41 91 751 02 32
fax: 011 41 91 751 74 65

Midnight Sun Film Festival
tel: 011 358 693 614 524
fax: 011 358 693 618 646

Moscow International Film Festival
tel: 011 7 095 917 2486
fax: 011 7 095 916 0107

Navas International Festival and Video Competition
tel: 011 34 3 839 0221
fax: 011 34 3 820 4031

Prix Futura Berlin
tel: 011 49 30 3031 1610
fax: 011 49 30 3031 1619

Special thanks to Will Kemp, Terry Stacey, Matthew Kaufman, Alain Cloarec, and Diane Markrow for bringing the changes to our attention.

If you find an error or change in our *Festival Guide, please* call Pam Calvert, (212) 807-1400 x 223. We will publish it in the magazine and include the information in updates we publish periodically.

Continued on p. 62

"HOW TO ..."

A SUMMER INTENSIVE WORKSHOP SERIES

The hard information you need to get your work made and seen in a world with fewer funders and distributors than ever.

How to Get Money for Films and Videos

Morrie Warshawski

Morrie Warshawski's first workshop on fundraising was so successful that we're doing it again, this time for a *full day* workshop on raising funds for film and videos. Learn how to design your film/video project to attract funders. Find out how to cultivate and approach funders up-front through telephone inquiries, letters and personal contacts. You may have missed the last workshop, but you can't afford to miss this one.

When: Saturday, June 15, 9 am - 4 pm
Where: AIVF Office
Price: $85 member/$100 others

No Budget Filmmaking

James Schamus

Schamus, co-director of NY production company Good Machine, has taught this now-legendary workshop all over the country to sell-out crowds. Learn the ins and outs of guerrilla cost control as only Schamus can teach it, in what amounts to a crash course in indie filmmaking.

When: Saturday, June 29, 10 am - 2 pm
Where: Manhattan location
Price: $55 member/ $70 others

How to Finance Your Film/Video Project in a Post Funding Universe

In a world with little or no funding, what are your options in financing your project? **Mary Jane Skalski** of Good Machine moderates this panel of finance professionals to unravel the mysteries of limited partnerships, co-production, sub-chapter-s and other possibilities.

When: Saturday, July 13, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
Price: $35 member/ $50 others

How to Find and Work with a Distributor

Looking for a distributor and don't know quite where to start? Come to this half day workshop and hear various distributors talk about what a producer should know before seeking a distributor, the role of the distributor, and the distributor's relationship to the producer.

When: Saturday , July 20, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
*Price: $35 member/ $50 others**

How to Read a Distribution Contract

Don't sign that distribution contract just yet!!! Wait until after you've taken this workshop. Join **Jodi Peikoff** of Sloss Law Offices, and benefit from her experience with John Sayles, Todd Haynes, Richard Linklater, and Whit Stillman. An expert in copyright, intellectual property, and new media, she will guide you through the intricacies of a distribution contract.

When: Saturday, July 20, 2 p.m.- 6 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
*Price: $25 member / $40 other**
**Take both July 20 workshops and save!*
$50 member/$65 others

How to Self-Distribute Your Work

If you're interested in self distribution, don't miss this full day of seminars with film/video makers who have undertaken the challenge of self-distribution. Panelists Ralph Arlyck of *New Day Films;* Joe Berlinger, producer/director of *Brother's Keeper*; Kathryn Bowser of *KJM3*; and Lori Castronuovo, associate producer of *The Uprising of '34*, will explain the benefits of self-distribution; the tools needed for self-distribution; and how to target a distribution market for your film/video.

When: Saturday, August 3, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
Price: $55 member/$70 others

REGISTRATION

Please circle the workshop you are registering for. Space is limited, reservations are required. 50% Deposit required to hold place.

Warshawski	**$85/100**	**Schamus**	**$55/70**
How to Finance	**$35/50**	**How to Find a Distributor**	**$35/50**
How to Read a Dist. Contract	**$25/40**	**How to Self- Distribute**	**$55/70**

Workshop Specials:

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Workshop Series Pass $240/325 *Enables you to attend all workshops*

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Member Number:_____ **Payment: Check**_____

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Make checks payable to: Foundation for Independent Video & Film (FIVF). Mail registration sheet with payment to:

AIVF/FIVF, 304 Hudson Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10013; *or Fax to:* **(212) 463-8519**

January 1, 1996

Independents line up for bargain rates at DCTV & Electric Film!



Downtown Community TV Center and Electric Film are located at 87 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10013 fax (212)219-0248

New York- **DCTV's** free classes and low cost equipment access have been attracting huge crowds to the historic firehouse on Lafayette Street.

When **DCTV** announced almost free Avid instruction & editing,community producers packed the sidewalk trying to get into the newly renovated building.

Despite warnings from the police, **Electric Film** has simultaneously opened newly installed Avid off-line and on-line editing suites with res 27 & amazing 3D-DVE. Interformat suite and inexpensive Betacam packages already make crowd control a daily problem. People can call DCTV at **1-800-VIDEONY** or **(212)966-4510** & Electric Film at **1-800-TAPELESS** or **(212)925-3429.**

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1996

the independent FILM&VIDEO monthly

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Squeeze Play

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Dealing with distribution



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August/September 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 7

Publisher: Ruby Lerner
Editor in Chief: Patricia Thomson
Managing Editor: Dana Harris
Editorial Assistant: Courtney Porter
Contributing Editors: Kathryn Bowser, Roberto Dardon-Quezada, Luke Hones, Barbara Bliss Osborn, Robert L. Seigel, Esq.
Art Director: Daniel Christmas
Advertising: Laura D. Davis (212) 807-1400 x225
National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Fine Print (800) 874-7082; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press
Send address changes to: *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013.

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent film and video, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@aol.com; http://www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF/

Periodical Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

Publication of *The Independent* is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Publication of any advertisement in *The Independent* does not constitute an endorsement. AIVF/FIVF are not responsible for any claims made in an ad.

Letters to *The Independent* should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length.

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AIVF/FIVF staff: Ruby Lerner, executive director; Jodie Magee, resource/development director; Cleo Cacoulidis, advocacy coordinator; Pamela Calvert, director of programs and services; Leslie Fields, membership coordinator; Oscar Cervera, membership associate; Johnny McNair, information services coordinator; Leslie Singer, director of administration.

AIVF/FIVF legal counsel: Robert I. Freedman, Esq., Leavy, Rosensweig & Hyman

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* FIVF Board of Directors only

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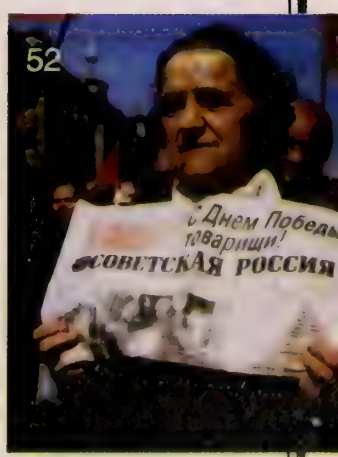
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On the cover: Robert Agredo as Uzi in Robert Patton-Spruill's *Squeeze* (courtesy filmmaker). Photos, clockwise from left: the protagonists of *Squeeze* (photo: Marcia Iabco); video artist Nam June Paik, who protests arts funding cuts in *The NEA Tapes INITIATIVE* (courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix); and one of the Russian women featured in *bye bye Babushka* (courtesy filmmaker).

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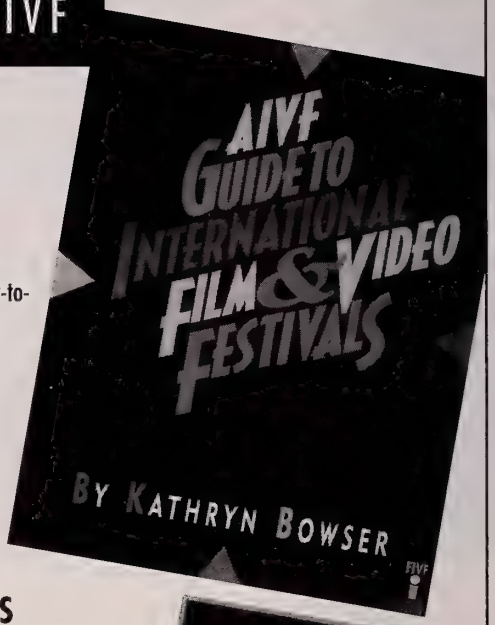
> **In making *Picture Bride* we turned many times to AIVF/FIVF publications for the facts on fundraising, production and distribution. Their books are up-to-date, well organized and accessible. Best of all, it's getting the 411 without the schmooze.**
>
> ***Kayo Hatta – "Picture Bride"***

> **When people ask me how and what festivals to enter, I simply refer them to AIVF/FIVF's Guide. Not only is it the most comprehensive and up to date listing I've seen but the indexes slice and dice the festivals into every conceivable category. It's absolutely indispensable for independent producers.**
>
> ***Frederick Marx – "Hoop Dreams"***

AIVF GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVALS

By Kathryn Bowser $34.95/$29.95 members
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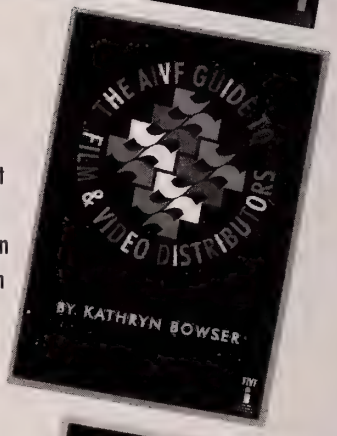
The 4th edition of FIVF's best seller is a completely indexed and easy-to-read compendium of over 400 international film and video festivals, with contact information, entry regulations, deadlines, categories, accepted formats, and much more. The Festival Guide includes information on all types of festivals: small and large, specialized and general, domestic and foreign.



AIVF GUIDE TO FILM & VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

Edited by Kathryn Bowser $24.95/$19.95 members
plus shipping and handling.

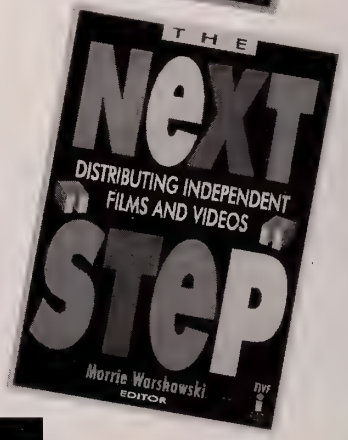
A must-read for film and video makers searching for the right distributor. The Distributors Guide presents handy profiles of nearly 200 commercial and nonprofit distributors, practical information and company statistics on the type of work handled, primary markets, relations with producers, marketing and promotion, foreign distribution and contacts. Fully indexed, this is the best compendium of distribution information especially tailored for independent producers available.



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plus shipping and handling.

Top professionals in the field answer frequently asked questions on distribution. Learn more about finding a distributor from Debra Zimmerman (*Women Make Movies*), self- distribution from Joe Berlinger (producer/director of *Brother's Keeper*), foreign distribution from Nancy Walzog (Tapestry International) and theatrical distribution from David Rosen (author of *Off Hollywood*). Plus find out about promotion; public broadcasting, cable and home video markets; non-theatrical distribution; contracts and much, much more.



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Letters

Get A Grip

To the editor,

I just finished reading Robert Dardon's enjoyable "Cheap Tricks: How to Write a No-Budget Film" [May 1996].

One error: C-stands (Century Stands) come in *two* sizes, not one: 40" and 20". The old 40" ones can serve a double purpose because the base can come off and be used as a turtle by dropping in the right stud adaptor... and save you some money.

Also, the low-budget screen writer should keep in mind contingent locations that serve the story. You don't often have time to reschedule for rain or a shift in day or night scenes due to equipment failing, bulbs burning out, actors stuck at work, or the equipment car/van breaking down. Sometimes you need to catch up by doing one scene, then spinning the camera 180 degrees and shooting a loss scene, Bunuel-style.

I'm looking forward to continuing how-to articles on no-budget productions.

Jim Taylor
Brighton, Massachusetts

Robert Dardon responds:

Thanks for enlightening me about the present state of C-Stands. It's been about 10 years since I've been a grip, and I forgot about "pony" stands. I should mention, though, that the official height is 29 inches. Resourceful grips can cut anything on a set down to whatever size works best—and will, unless very carefully watched.

Now what might be news to you, Jim, was something else I'd forgotten: C-stands actually come in three sizes! 29", 40", and the behemoth 72".

The removable base on the 40" stand was news to me. I made a call to Matthews Studio Equipment and learned that the reason I'd not heard of the C-Plus Stands (the official name) is that they are only a couple of years old. They can indeed be taken apart and used to hold a light near the floor (a "turtle", as you informed us), but what I really like about these new stands is that the grip head has grooved diamond-shaped holes rather than the standard round holes. The round ones lose their grip when holding very heavy cantilevered objects and don't work as well as they get older. Any grip who's ever been humiliated by "Flacid Flag Syndrome" will appreciate this.

There are always rumors floating around regarding where the name C-stand originated. One was that a grip at Twentieth Century Fox Studios had invented this versatile tool and hence the name Century. Another was that the name referred to the stand's 100 uses. As most grips know, all of this is nonsense. The name actually comes from the original manufacturer of the stand, which was a company in Los Angeles called Century.

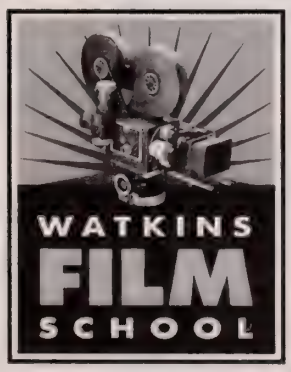
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LETTERS

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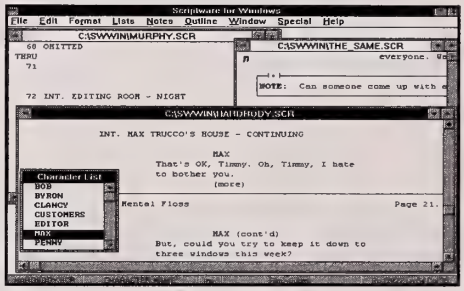
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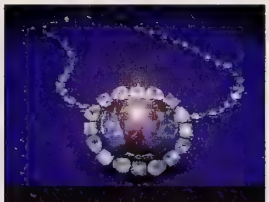
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media news

CREATING TOOLS FOR THE CULTURE WARS

The NEA Tapes INITIATIVE and Artistic Freedom Under Attack

EDITED BY DANA HARRIS

CENSORSHIP MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: DURing the past year, both William Shakespeare and The Butt Trumpets encountered censorship problems. Remarkably, Shakespeare lost his battle (a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was successfully banned from a high school in Chehalis, Washington), while the Trumpets won theirs (the Leominster, Massachusetts city council voted not to stick "parental advisory" labels on the album *Primitive Enema*.)

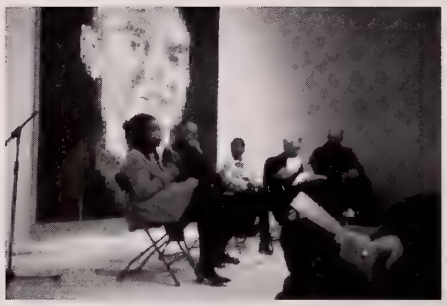
Such are the typically bizarre tales from the bloody war on popular culture and artistic expression. On Capitol Hill, the Republican foot soldiers of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) fight side-by-side with conservative Democrats to defund the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Elsewhere, Religious Right groups target any and all "blasphemous" and "obscene" audiovisual materials crossing their paths.

Nevertheless, the actions of the pro-censorship lobby haven't gone unchecked or unchallenged. Two particularly encouraging signs of dissent come from the People for the American Way's (PFAW) *artsave* project and *The NEA Tapes INITIATIVE*, a documentary-in-progress by New York video and performance artists Paul Lamarre and Melissa Wolf.

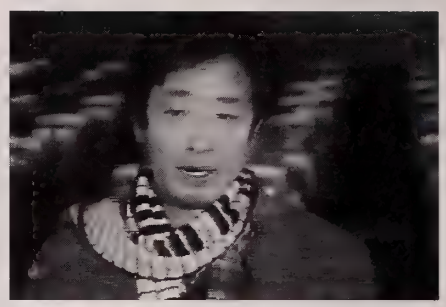
taking *INITIATIVE*

NEW YORK MEDIA ARTIST PAUL LAMARRE BRISTles as he quotes the frequent clarion call of syndicated *Los Angeles Times* columnist Cal Thomas: "We must hunt down the NEA and cut off its head."

Lamarre and his wife, fellow media artist Melissa Wolf, did more than take offense to the anti-NEA diatribe of media conservatives and political opportunists. In January 1995, they rebelled by beginning work on *The NEA Tapes INITIATIVE*. The ambitious documentary, which is still in production, features interviews with a broad range of people who have benefited from or are ardent defenders of the NEA. The speakers include health care workers, religious groups, and artists in all media.



From the *INITIATIVE*: Artists discuss the NEA. From left, Farai Chiyeda, Bill T. Jones, Thelma Jones, Paul Lamarre, and Cluck Close. Courtesy Melissa Wolf



Video artist Nam June Paik contributes his two cents to *The NEA Tapes INITIATIVE*.
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix

The videomakers say their interviews and objectives go beyond the traditional New York backdrop in order to convey the national importance of the NEA and the widespread public support of federally funded arts programs. "We believe in getting out of the studio and using the media to make the artists more accountable and visible in Washington," Lamarre says. "We learned we are the least powerful lobbying body in Washington."

Since launching this project, Lamarre and Wolf have taped more than 100 people affected by the NEA attacks, including curators, writers, and producers. These include filmmakers Michael Blackwood, Cal Scaggs, and Jonas Mekas, and video artists Nam June Paik and Catherine Saalfield. In a particularly inspired move, Lamarre and Wolf will go to the backyards of Jesse Helms and Newt Gingrich by targeting Christians in Southern states who are similarly offended by the Christian Right's NEA attacks.

"The thing that came out a lot [in the interviews] was that people are shocked and appalled," says Lamarre. "They're just sort of dazed that they actually have to defend such a thing."

Lamarre says NEA sympathizers usually have a hard time articulating their defense when confronted by individuals who object to public funding of "controversial" art, even though a majority of federally funded art is seldom deemed controversial. "They have almost come to believe what has been propagated by the PR blitz over the last six years [of NEA attacks]," says Lamarre.

Lamarre and Wolf expect to complete *The NEA Tapes INITIATIVE* within two years. Although the documentary is sponsored by the New York Foundation for the Arts, Lamarre and Wolf have received about 10 percent of its proposed $500,000 budget from the private sector and are still seeking benefactor support for the balance.

In addition, they're assembling 15 minutes of interview clips for news and morning shows and sending the video with mass signatures of NEA support to President Clinton. Lamarre believes the NEA will remain in place if Clinton is reelected in November. Local art councils will also be made aware of the video project.

"Great countries support the arts," explains Lamarre. "Right now, the city of Hamburg gives more to the arts than all of the United States."

For more information about *The NEA Tapes INITIATIVE*, contact Paul Lamarre or Melissa Wolf at (212) 529-0487; eida@thing.net.



artsave shows artistic freedom under attack

ARTSAVE IS AN INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE on U.S. censorship that collects, examines, and verifies information provided by artists, institutions, and the media. For the past four years, *artsave* has published its findings in *Artistic Freedom Under Attack*, a resource catalog for First Amendment activists. The 212-page 1996 edition summarizes 137 actions against the arts in over 40 states. In addition to these case studies, the catalogue includes an overview of key findings and trends. The most disconcerting fact is that in 73 percent of the case studies, artistic works were removed or restricted by the institutions exhibiting them.

Film and television productions were particularly vulnerable. Miramax's *Priest* was pulled from two New Jersey cinemas. R-rated films such as *Schindler's List*, *Macbeth* (by Roman Polanski), *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *The Piano* faced suppression in many high schools. Even the acclaimed civil rights documentary *Eyes on the Prize* was banned at a Dorchester, Massachusetts elementary school.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, homophobia triggered many censorship actions. The Christian Coalition tried (and failed) to stop a Durham, South Carolina gay and lesbian film festival from showing *The Sum of Us*, *Dyke Dramas*, *Salmonberries*, and *Boys Shorts: The New Queer Cinema*.

However, another gay/lesbian fest in Charlotte, North Carolina was forced to hold a screening for visiting media artists Todd Haynes and Su Friedrich without public funding. (See "Out of Sight: Nervous Nellies in North Carolina Reject Gay Fest," Media News, May 1996). In Washington, DC, Mark Huestis' AIDS documentary *Sex is...* was cited by anti-NEA lobbyisits for receiving a $4,000 NEA grant, and a scheduled screening of Takehiro Nakajima's gay drama *Okoge* was cancelled at the Smithsonian-affiliated Freer Gallery.

In similar cases, *Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story*, an NBC-TV drama about the discharge of a lesbian army colonel, was partially edited by the network's Huntsville, Alabama affiliate. In San Antonio, Texas, Barbara Hammer's *Nitrate Kisses* was cited (strangely enough) by the editor or a monthly gay publication who urged the city council to eliminate public arts funding for "offensive" and "pornographic" works. In a fascinating exception, Frank Ripploh's graphic 1981 gay film *Taxi zum Klo* received clearance at the University of Iowa despite several advance student complaints.

"We're hoping that people will use [*Artistic Freedom Under Attack*] to create coalitions in support of free expression," says Anne Green, *artsave*'s project coordinator and legislative counsel.

The PFAW report is available for $15.95, which includes an *artsave* Action Kit for activists to consult when fighting future censorship crises. Artists who need technical assistance and help can receive a free copy of the Action Kit. For more information, contact PFAW, 2000 M St. NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036; (800) 743-6768; pfaw@pfaw.org; http://www. pfaw.org.

MAX ALVAREZ

Max Alvarez wrote about American Playhouse in the June issue of The Independent.

The Telecommunications Act Says *That*?

IT WOULD BE EASY TO WEAVE THE TELEcommunications Act of 1996 into conspiracy theory. Government documents are renowned for their ability to make your eyes beg to skim the page or abandon it altogether. No reading, no understanding–and no reaction.

This lack of comprehension is especially threatening to independent film- and videomakers because "telecommunications" doesn't exactly sound like a personal concern. However, the Telecommunications Act not only threatens outlets for work on television and the Internet, but it also opens the door to censorship while closing it on alternative media's foot. The act also creates a world where the phone company becomes an all-powerful utility, and a single media conglomerate can dictate service to an entire community.

There's some good stuff, too. The act also creates a window of opportunity for people to define the quality of connection services (will you be able to download at 14.4 or 128 baud?) that will be available in public outlets like libraries and schools. However, nothing can

happen unless you say something, and if you say something it helps to know what you're talking about.

Here, then, is the jargon-free 411 on the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This won't cover every aspect of the act; it highlights the sections that affect mediamakers most and explains what you can do about them.

Title V: Obscenity and Violence, Section 502

***What it is:* First Amendment? What First Amendment?**

The Communications Decency Act makes it illegal to use interactive computer services to make any comment or image that is considered "patently offensive" (according to "community standards") available to anyone under 18. Examples might include online discussions of safe sex, or museums who put nudes on the Web.

***What it means:* Censoring the Net.**

Media artists should have little trouble calling this provision censorship. However, the particularly insidious section of the act is the idea of "community standards" for the Internet. With the Internet's global outreach, does this reduce "standards" to the lowest common denominator? The act also includes yet another form of censorship, and one that's less likely to be overturned in court: the act could exclude the vast majority of people from providing content before they even can be "censored" (see "Title I," below left).

Finally, a political wallop of a postcript. At the last minute, Rep. Henry J. Hyde (R-IL) slipped a provision in the act extending a little-known and unenforced 19th-century law that prohibits sending materials "of an indecent character" and "any article or thing designed or intended for the prevention of concepton or procuring of abortion" through the mail. While this provision carries little practical impact—its unconstitutionality makes it all but impossible to enforce—it stands as an uncomfortable benchmark of the current political climate.

***Where it's at:* In the courts.**

Challenges from coalitions headed by the ACLU and the American Library Association put this act in the Philadelphia district court, where a three-judge panel found the act unconstitutional (one called it "profoundly repugnant") and blocked its enforcement on June 12. However, the act's creators expected this backlash and wrote in provisions that allow swift appeals to both the panel and the Supreme Court, where it's probably headed next.

Title II: Broadcast Services, Section 202

***What it is:* Media concentrate.**

Once, a company could own no more than 12 broadcast television stations and reach up to 25 percent of the nation's households. The act removes the station cap and decrees that a single company can reach as many as 35 percent of households. The act also allows a single company to own both a broadcast television network and a cable company. For radio, all national ownership limits have been repealed and in a local market a single company can own as many as 8 stations.

"I've heard a lot of people refer to the act as the 'Telecommunications Re-Monopolization Act'"

***What it means:* Mega media monopolies.**

It can be nauseating to consider the media power wielded by, say, the proposed Time Warner-Turner merger. However, another stomach-turning possibility is that all this melding could turn programming into mush.

Douglas Schuler, author of *New Community Networks: Wired for Change*, says programming intended for extremely broad audiences tends to move away from the independent, politically diverse, or controversial in favor of generic subjects and styles that easily translate between communities and even countries. "There's a certain advantage to producing one thing and blasting it out to everybody," says Schuler.

The theory behind these new rules is that changing technology allows new competitors to enter the market, which makes old regulations unnecessary or detrimental to "healthy" competition. While the act technically opens competition, it also allows corporations to merge and easily squash small-time competitors. "I've heard a lot of people refer to the act as the 'Telecommunications Re-Monopolization Act'," says Schuler. "In certain rural markets, it will be possible for one company to control all the news."

***Where it's at:* In the FCC's lap.**

The FCC is still considering certain related regulations such as single ownership of two TV stations in the same market and how often stations should renew their licenses. Also, most mergers are approved by the FCC on a case-by-case basis.

Title IV: Cable Service, Section 653

***What it is:* It's a phone company–no, it's a cable company–wait, it's both!**

The act created something called an Open Video System (OVS). An OVS provides programming like a cable company and it has to pay a public fee to operate, but it doesn't have to deal with much of the FCC's cable regulations.

Theoretically, the OVS designation is an "incentive" for telephone companies to get into the programming business. That is, when the here-any-day-now technology that allows video signals to pass through telephone lines arrives, the phone companies will upgrade their systems and become "content providers." In exchange for receiving less regulation than a cable system, an OVS must let affiliated and unaffliated programmers compete, with up to two-thirds of OVS capacity available to the unaffiliated.

***What it means:* Less regulation and higher prices.**

In creating the OVS, Congress left a gaping loophole. Under the current act, *any* system–including current, "old-fashioned" cable systems–can declare themselves an OVS and skirt cable's regulations. "It's just a change in paperwork. There's no technological change," says Jeff Hops, who handles government relations for the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) in Washington, DC. "To become an OVS, they don't even have to twist a knob."

However, the FCC did rule that public, educational, and governmental access centers must receive the same amount of support from an OVS as from local cable companies. At one point, it also seemed like OVS offered additional opportunities for mediamakers. Unfortunately, paradise lost.

"It seemed to suggest that there would be a meaningful market for nonaffiliated programmers without having to rely on a cable gatekeeper," says Hops. "That was the hope. Now it seems like back-door deregulation of

the cable industry." Hops predicts that OVS prices will be so high that few unaffiliated programmers will be able to afford access. And since OVS providers don't have to disclose contracts, there's little practical recourse for unfair treatment.

Where it's at: **Dear FCC, Won't you reconsider?**
As we went to press, the ACM and other coalitions were making the case to the FCC for a lower nonprofit access rate. The process, called reconsideration, has an August 8 deadline. If this doesn't provide any guarantees, the next step would be a federal Court of Appeals. "True competition requires technological and economic parity," says Barry Forbes, executive director of the ACM. "The FCC left the job half undone."

Title I: Telecommunication Services, various sections

What it is: **Free love for Ma Bell.**
With many regulations and restrictions lifted, telephone companies get to play a huge role in the media world. They're investing hundreds of millions to get in the video business, and the carriers are no longer limited to providing only local or long-distance service. All carriers are now free to compete and merge. These provisions are intended to increase competition (sound familiar?), but since the act passed on February 8, the seven regional bell operating companies, through two mergers, are now only four.

What it means: **Lot of programming, little diversity.**
The good news is that with phone companies in the video business, there are more programming opportunities. The bad news is that all the content could be decided by the same people.

Where it's at: **Back in the hands of the FCC..**
If the telcos can prove that there's local-market competition, they can enter the long-distance market. Bellsouth and Ameritech are currently patching together limited interconnection agreements with other phone companies to "prove" that they face competition.

Title I: Telecommunication Services, sec. 254

What it is: **Universal Service.**
In the original 1934 Communications Act, "universal service" ensured that telephone companies offered similar prices for similar telephone services in rural and urban areas.

MEDIA NEWS

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Recognizing that people now use telephones for more than making voice phone calls, the act redefines universal service, specifically naming libraries, schools, and health centers to receive "advanced services" at "discounted rates."

What it means: **Everyone may get a hand in weaving the Web.**
The opportunity for schools and libraries to access the Internet at reduced rates means they also have the potential to play an important role in providing an electronic, noncommercial, community-based space for alternative voices.

Where it's at: **Under deliberation, and awaiting your word.**
A joint Federal-State board is currently deliberating how to define "universal service," and they're supposed to deliver their recommendations to the FCC in November. Each state also has a chance to enhance the federal definitions. "This is an ideal time to apply pressure in order to broaden the definition of universal service," says Christopher Kirkham, a legal researcher at Access for All, a New York-based telecommunications advocacy organization. "On a local level, communities have never had as much opportunity to affect telecommunications policy as they do now."

MEDIA NEWS

How to Be Heard

"The way to comment on any portion of the Telecommunications Act is to let the FCC hear your opinions," says Hops. However, there are several mediums to carry your message, and each has its advantages and drawbacks.

File with the FCC. The FCC has periods where anyone can file comments. While you could simply write a letter to the FCC, there's not much chance they'll pay attention to it unless it's in the form of a filing, a formal response to an FCC rulemaking. To find out which rulemakings are open, go to the FCC Website (www.fcc.gov) or call (202) 418-0200. The FCC allows 60 days for comments and 30 days for replies to those comments.

Upside: By law, they have to pay attention to your comments. You know they're reading your letters.

Downside: Filing is an astonishingly complex process that could make anyone lose their democratic spirit. Also, lobbyists say that while a filing does raise your profile, it still doesn't have the same clout as a call from your congressional representative.

Write your representative, and have him or her write the FCC. Politicians hold the FCC's pursestrings, so the FCC tends to be

more interested in hearing your senator's opinion on Universal Service than yours. "The FCC doesn't care about voters, but they do care about Congress," says Hops.

Upside: If you can convince your representative to make the call, you can be sure that your voice was heard. Also, Congress doesn't have deadlines for filing comments.

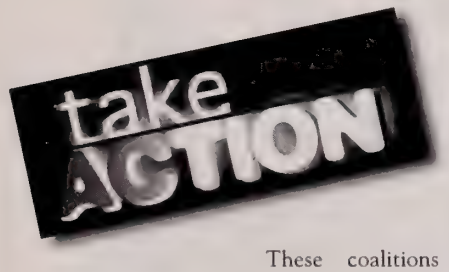
Downside: You have to rely on your representative to follow through.

Get involved at the grassroots level. As corporate giants buy up the media landscape, now is the time to join ranks if you're interested in maintaining public space for independent information, media, and art. "Form collaborative projects with libraries, schools, health centers, community networks, computer centers, public access television providers, and media organizations," says Schuler. Supporting organizations like those listed below is another good way to ensure your voice is heard.

Upside: If your coalition makes enough of a ruckus, politicians really do pay attention. "Government works," says Forbes. "It may not always do what you want, but it works."

Downside: Stale cookies at monthly meetings.

MEDIA NEWS



These coalitions operate in the public interest for telecommunications issues, and are great shortcuts for getting involved in the political process.

Access For All; 212-260-2670, ext. 319

Alliance for Community Media; 202-393-2650; scm@alliancecm.org

The Benton Foundation; 202-638-5770; www.benton.org

Chicago Coalition for Information Access; 312-384-8827

Telecommunications Policy Roundtable; 617-542-5555

JAMIE MCCLELLAND AND DANA HARRIS

Jamie McClelland is a technology and policy specialist at Libraries for the Future, a nonprofit that advocates on behalf of public library users. Dana Harris is the managing editor of The Independent.







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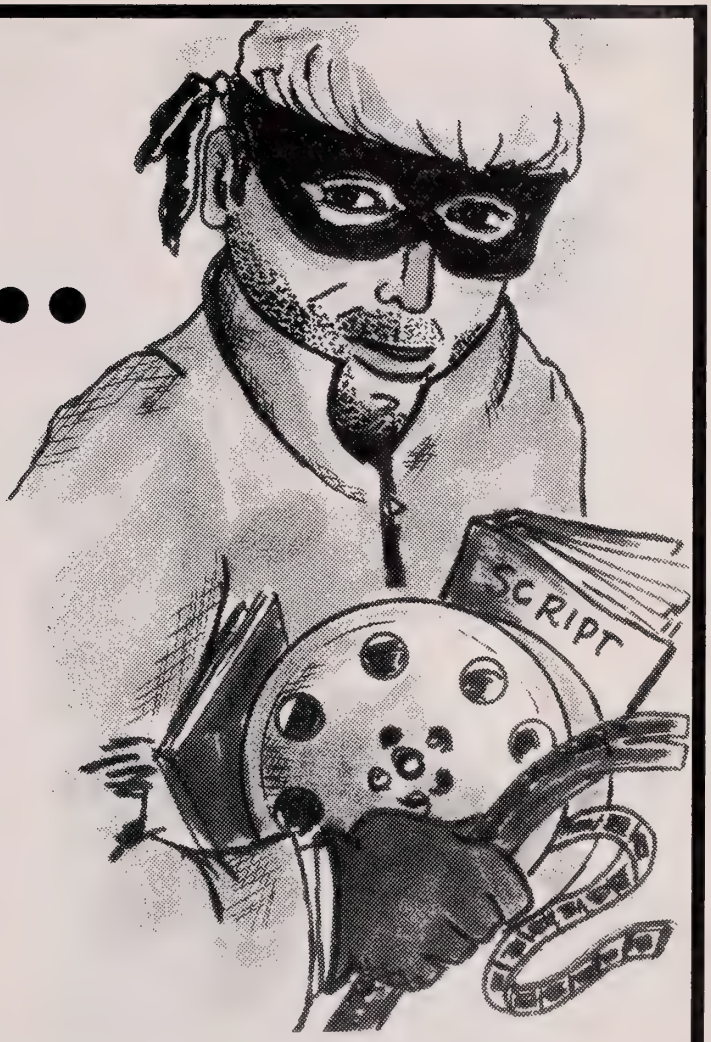
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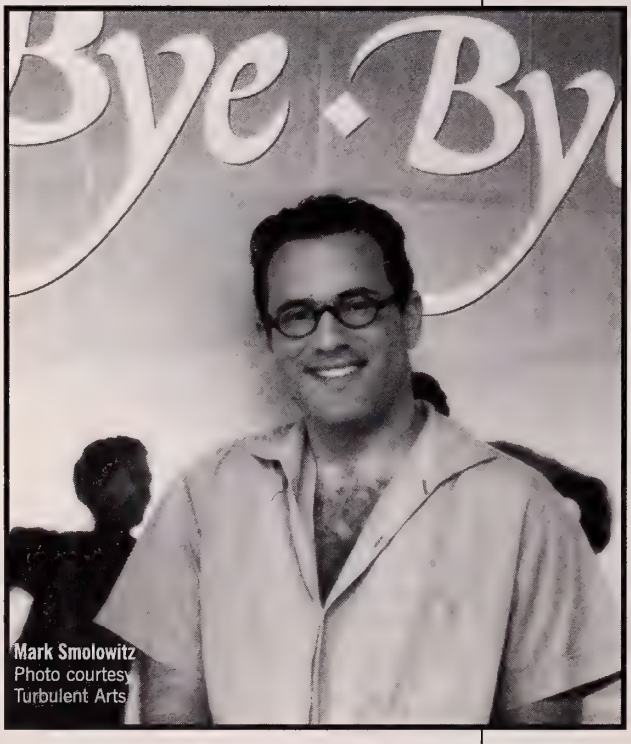
talking heads

MARK SMOLOWITZ

distributor

TURBULENT ARTS

BY MICHAEL FOX



Mark Smolowitz
Photo courtesy Turbulent Arts

MARC SMOLOWITZ RESOLVED TO MAKE A SPLASH last year when he launched his San Francisco distribution company, Turbulent Arts, with *Fanci's Persuasion*, Charles Herman-Wurmfeld's "chaotic fairy tale for the queer urban world." So he advertised the film's Los Angeles engagement in no less than five Tinseltown newspapers—even though *Fanci*'s run lasted a mere three weekends in the midnight slot at the Sunset Laemmle 5.

"It was a guaranteed money loser," the 27-year-old Smolowitz freely admits. "But I wanted everyone who reads about movies in *the* movie town to know about Turbulent Arts. I realized very early on that the only way I was going to survive financially as an independent distributor was if I quickly and aggressively obtained a national profile."

With *Fanci's Persuasion* slated to play in 15 markets by the end of 1996 and a pair of other pickups rolling into theaters this year (the gay German documentary *Menmaniacs: The Legacy of Leather* and the French drama *Bye Bye*, which opened this year's New Directors/New Films festival at New York's Museum of Modern Art), Turbulent Arts' star is indeed rising. But Smolowitz's eclectic tastes and ambitious aims pose a challenge in positioning his company. Unlike countless other neophyte distributors who attempted to stake out a distinct niche in gay cinema or rarefied foreign art films—or American independents or new-generation European directors—Turbulent Arts wants to play in all those arenas. In a risky business that's increasingly driven by bottom-line strategies, even in the niche market, Smolowitz talks about taste and "sensibilities," words that recall Harvey and Bob Weinstein's pre-Disney approach to acquisitions.

"I'm very committed to U.S. independent producers and directors, and there will always be a place for them here," says Smolowitz. "In the longer range, I want Turbulent Arts to be a distributor of international cinema. I want to support and release non-English language films in the U.S. and Canadian markets. Inevitably you have to grow and be more commercial, but I believe that even if Turbulent Arts picks up larger films, the success of those films can help smaller films. If there's anything my company's about, it's filmmakers."

Smolowitz's proclamation echoes not only Miramax's early philosophy, but also the methods parlayed into success and influence by a certain West Coast distributor. "Strand Releasing is a model for me, and I'm proud to say it," Smolowitz says. "Audiences associate the distributor with the film they are seeing, and that's something Strand does well. And like Strand, I'm also a producer."

Indeed, Turbulent Arts is coproducing *Sailing to Hawaii*, the next political comedy by Russian director Yuri Mamin (*Window to Paris*). As Smolowitz sees it, production is a natural complement to distribution. "If I distribute your first film, maybe I'll produce your second and distribute your third. And if I have a distribution mechanism in place and the films I produce don't get picked up by the bigger companies, that doesn't mean they won't get a release. Plus, in the long run I can develop an international sales network."

Born in New York and raised in Los Angeles, Smolowitz has lived in San Francisco since 1990, where he immersed himself in the local festival scene. Smolowitz did his apprenticeship and honed his contacts through stints at the San Francisco International Jewish Film Festival and at IFFCON (International Film Financing Conference), where he continues to serve as an advisor. But as successful and respected as each event is, he felt that a piece of the puzzle was missing.

"I was frustrated with festivals," Smolowitz explains. "You do fifty percent of the work to open a film at a festival, and then it's never shown again in the United States."

As a one-man band, Smolowitz is constrained in the number of films he can handle at one time, but he envisions a release schedule of four to six films a year in the near future. His current game plan consists of assembling an investor group on a per-project basis to cover the acquisition rights, prints, and advertising budget. "One of the things I've learned is I'm not afraid to ask people for money," Smolowitz says with a smile. "All they can do is say no."

Meanwhile, as long as he can grow and prosper in his adopted city, he has no plans to relocate to one of the coastal hubs. "Part of what I feel I'm committed to," Smolowitz muses, "is expanding the film business in San Francisco and putting it on the map in a different way. As long as San Francisco can accommodate what I try to do, I'll stay here. Also, being based here contributes to my media profile: It piques people's interest. Being a new distributor in New York isn't unique."

For all his dreams and optimism, Smolowitz is fully aware that filmmakers don't mention Turbulent Arts in the same breath as Miramax, Fine Line, or Sony Pictures Classics. And he recognizes the min-

imal revenue he presently generates for Landmark Theaters and other arthouse exhibitors and his commensurate lack of leverage. That's to be expected, Smolowitz shrugs; the trick is to keep making phone calls and moving forward.

"I approach every day in this business in a spirit of learning," Smolowitz says. He chuckles and adds, "And I apply what I learn *very* quickly."

Turbulent Arts, 673 Oak Street #1, San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 552-1952; fax: 552-3620; turbarts@sirius.com.

Michael Fox profiled Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman's The Celluloid Closet *in the April issue.*

○

JOEL ROODMAN & PATRICK McDARRAH

head honchos

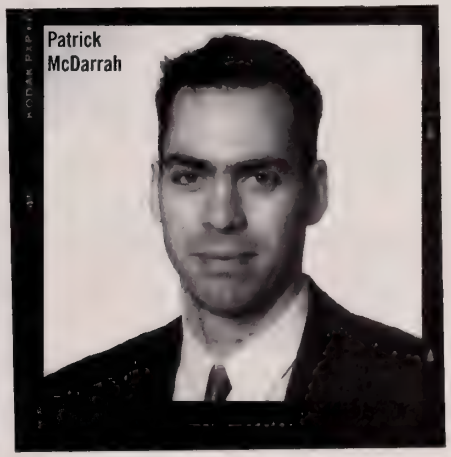
GOTHAM ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

BY DANA HARRIS

HERE'S THE PITCH: IN MARCH 1995, HOT-shot Miramax executives Joel Roodman, 37, and McDarrah, 29, break away to form their own production company, Gotham Entertainment Group. No hard feelings. Within a year, Gotham has a first-look deal with their former bosses as well as a niche distributing Miramax films to college campuses. Then, Gotham builds a bustling production schedule. Gotham makes a foray into theatrical distribution. And Gotham has a real open-door policy for unsolicited scripts and films because, as McDarrah says, "What other avenues make sense to get creative material?"



Joel Roodman
Courtesy
Gotham
Entertainment
Group



Patrick
McDarrah

While Gotham's story has several fantastic elements (*no* hard feelings?), it's all true. In addition to *chutzpah*, McDarrah and Roodman share an eye for the commercial end of independent work and created a 15-employee company to serve their vision. And in just a year and a half, Gotham's already all over the map. Current projects include producing Georgy Shklarovsky's documentary *Chernobyl—The Dead Zone*, representing Larry Turner's *Tattoo Boy* (which took top honors at the New York Underground Film Festival), and assisting in Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's theatrical self-distribution efforts for *Paradise Lost*. Gotham's also coproducing the $8 million *Goodbye Lover* (directed by Roland Joffe) and the $1.2 million *Wrinkles*, a spoof about a psychotic grandmother directed by first-timer Marcus Spiegel. Also in the works is production of a $17.5 million airline disaster flick, *Fall from the Sky*.

With plans to put $25 million worth of films into production, young Gotham already resembles a serious player. Both Roodman and McDarrah attribute much of their know-how to their Miramax tenure: McDarrah moved through Miramax's acquisition, coproduction, and international divisions, while Roodman made his way from being an assistant to being the vice president of market development. However, when Disney bought Miramax, disenchantment set in. "When Disney bought the place, things started to change and it became less the rough and rugged indie and more of a studio," says McDarrah. "I started to feel like I wanted to move on with my career."

Rather than look for greener pastures, Roodman and McDarrah decided to grow their own. While developing a full-fledged entertainment company that handles film and television production and distribution as well as new media programming isn't everyone's idea of how to "move on," McDarrah says the venture seemed at least as reasonable as finding a niche in New York's fiercely competitive entertainment industry. "It seemed as easy to start our own thing as it would be to try to go out and get a job at one of the three companies that was doing production at that point," says McDarrah.

The trades wagged their tongues over Miramax's loss, but their old boss seemed to nod approval of the new venture: Gotham signed a first-look deal with Miramax in April 1995, and last fall Miramax gave Gotham the task of distributing their newest hot potato, *Kids*, to college campuses. Or, as McDarrah puts it, "The word is 'provocative.' Not 'controversial'. Never 'controversial.' The concept we came up with was to market it as an event with a theatrical profile."

That concept was *KIDS* On Campus, a screening program strikingly similar to the sort often used by small-scale self distributors. Gotham called editors at school papers to suggest *Kids*-inspired editorials and articles, created a website that allowed students to talk about their reactions to the film, and fueled interaction between the faculty and students. "Up until now, booking films to colleges had been just a catalog business," says Roodman. "We got the professors to become involved, to go to their classrooms and say, 'Here's a film that talks about a lot of issues.'"

The hands-on marketing worked: to date, *Kids* has screened at nearly 400 schools to sold-out crowds, and the film is being booked again for the fall. Gotham also put *Blue in the Face* and *Unzipped* on the college circuit, and this fall they plan to roll out a slate that includes *Girls Town*, *Drunks*, *Stonewall*, and *Paradise Lost*. They'll also offer the colleges a best-of-the-fest package from the New York Underground Film Festival, among which is their own *Tattoo Boy*.

"We're branding ourselves as the college film distribution company," says Roodman, adding yet another dimension to Gotham's scope. "The colleges reach into the community and draw out a consumer base. These are good films that some communities would never see."

Distribution success aside, Roodman and McDarrah say they give equal attention to production. Good productions need good material. Hence, the open door. "We're chasing good ideas, regardless where they come from," says Roodman. "We'll take anyone's call. You don't need to have an agent. There's no one sitting here trying to protect their ass."

Like most production companies, Gotham uses readers. Unlike most production companies, they also read those production company pariahs, unsolicited scripts. "It's the backbone," says McDarrah. "How do we keep up with it? It's just a matter of having to keep up with it. That's where we're going to get our material."

It's not hard to compare Gotham's current tack to that of the early Miramax. Like their former bosses, McDarrah and Roodman have an eye for films in which edginess can be used as a marketing tool. However, they say they don't want Gotham to mingle independent filmmaking's church and state, production and distribution. With that in mind, the distribution of *Goodbye Lover* will be handled by Warner Bros.

"They [Miramax] were basically aggressive entrepreneurs who saw a gap in the business and tried to fill it," says Roodman "And they filled it, quite successfully. Arguably, they've moved on and that gap remains. And it provides an opportunity for smaller companies such as ourselves. There's so many films that deserve a theatrical release and they never get a chance. As we grow, we'll be able to provide them with those channels."

However, that doesn't mean Gotham plans to release its own productions. "The distribution means we'll be working with other people's movies," says McDarrah. "As soon as you get too close to that studio model, when you start releasing your own movies, you lose focus. I'd like to think our company has the opportunity to stay small and never lose sight of where we came from."

Adds Roodman, "I don't know about staying small, but..."

"Close to the ground," says McDarrah.

If you want to send a script to Gotham, the contact person is Noah Baylin, director of development. Finished films should go to Brian Moriarty, director of acquisitions. The address for Gotham Entertainment Group is 99 Hudson Street, Suite 200, New York, New York 10013.

Dana Harris is the managing editor of The Independent.

TALKING HEADS

ROBERT FAUST

festival director

LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

BY ROBERTO QUEZADA-DARDON

ROBERT FAUST DOES THINGS THE SAME WAY HE WALKS—in fast, long, effective strides. In two short years, he's managed to fix a glaring problem with the indie landscape of Los Angeles: the movie capital of the world had no major independent feature film festival. So in 1995, he founded The Los Angeles Independent Film Festival (LAIFF), which has already become an event that attracts acquisition people from major and mini-major distributors, as well as movie stars and high-profile independent premieres.

How does a transplanted New Yorker manage to create a industry happening on the West Coast so quickly?

"I started out by writing letters. Tons of them, more than I could count," says the 30-year-old Faust, who moved to the West Coast seven years ago. "I had a vision, so to speak, of what I thought the city needed, and I set the structure up in my head of what I wanted to see. I put an advisory board together while trying to find sponsors while also trying to bring in the nonprofit film organizations. This is not one organization's event; it's actually this city's event."

Faust's professional history and connections certainly helped open many doors for the LAIFF. He had experience in marketing *Filmmaker* magazine, associate produced the IFP/West Spirit awards for two years, and worked with an artists' management company for a couple of years before that. He got his start in half-hour comedy development for Columbia Pictures Television.

Faust's was able to garner support from many of Los Angeles's key nonprofit film organizations: IFP/West, Black Filmmakers Foundation, American Cinematheque, the Coalition of Asian Pacifics, International Documentary Association, Out on the Screen, FilmForum, the National Latino Communication Center, and Women in Film-LA. These groups reached out to their constituencies to get submissions and encourage them to attend the festival.



Faust also rustled up help with finances and services from larger for-profit companies. LAIFF's sponsors include the Sundance Channel, Kodak, the Director's Guild of America, Miramax, Live, and United Airlines, to name a few.

So what has Faust's zealous effort spawned? Submissions to this year's five-day event, held April 18-22, numbered in excess of 700 (up 130 percent from the first year). A total of 55 features and shorts were selected. Attendance more than doubled, with the unofficial estimate being around 12,000.

What's more, the festival is on its way to developing a distinctive personality in its search for films that are, above all, "intensely personal," according to Thomas Ethan Harris, one of LAIFF's program directors. The selection committee also seems to have a soft spot for films with strong visual elements. *Mugshot*, *Alchemy*, and *Squeeze* are simply dazzling. *Grind*, *Ripe*, and *Captive* are

highly polished efforts. What is remarkable is that all of these films—in fact, 14 of the 15 dramatic features in the festival—are directorial debuts. What seems to distinguish this crop from independent films of past years is that many were made by people who are highly active in television commercials and music videos.

Submissions are viewed primarily by Faust, program directors Harris and Shainee Gabel, and at least one member of the advisory panel (which this year included Allison Anders, Gale Anne Hurd, Edward Olmos, John Pierson, and Robert Laemmle, to name five out of 19). Faust is adamant about one thing: all entries are viewed from beginning to end by at least one program director and, in nearly all cases, two more judges. All filmmakers who call will get a patient explanation of why their film was or was not selected.

Faust had no pre-ordained plan for his festival line-up, but these are the patterns that emerged: most entries and selections came from the Northeast. Four hundred submissions (including 125 documentaries) were more than 60 minutes long. Of the 19 features selected, four were documentaries. Of the 36 shorts selected, six were nonfiction. Fifteen of the 55 films were directed by women.

Faust feels the public's turnout and the sponsors' enthusiasm prove that Los Angeles truly needs an independent film festival. "The industry recognizes it as something that they can use," he says with a smile. "Acquisition people are coming in from as far as New York to see films. It's really exciting. My plan is to keep it manageable as a one-week event, but to expand on the size and number of theaters in order to accommodate the response—maybe show the films more than once so that everyone who wants to can see them."

An energetic and charismatic perfectionist, Faust took only one weekend off after this year's festival to make arrangements for his upcoming wedding. He then jumped back into meetings with his festival crew in order to make improvements for the third annual LAIFF next April.

Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, 8306 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 28, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (213) 937-9137. The festival begins accepting applications for 1997 in October.

Roberto Quezada-Dardon (indie@indiefilm.com) is a freelance writer recently transplanted to Manhattan from L.A. He contributes regularly to The Independent *and to various Internet publications.*

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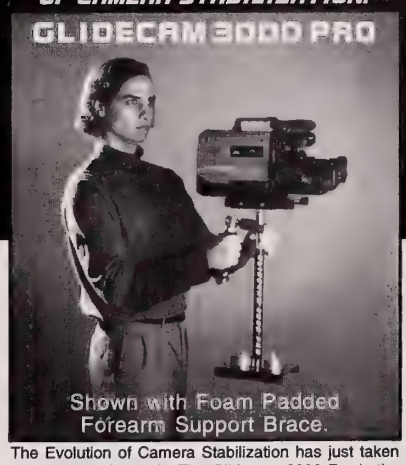
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field reports

CANNES '96

SANS HOOPLA

BY BARBARA SCHARRES



ARE WE HAVING FUN YET? One of the low-budget indie features creating a buzz at Cannes was Greg Mottola's *The Daytrippers*, with (L-R) Hope Davis, Liev Schreiber, and Parker Posey. Courtesy Alliance

When the international film community takes over the Riviera resort town of Cannes each May amid legendary hype and spectacle, it can come as a rude shock that there are still French people around. More likely to flaunt small, scrappy dogs than cel phones, these gray-haired couples with canes and vacationers pushing strollers amble along the Croissette taking in mimes and hawkers, oblivious to the industry types who would all but knock them down in a stampede between the festival's headquarters in the Palais and the town's string of swanky hotels and beach restaurants. This year the festival's modest local outreach program appeared to be a success, for there they were, invading our sacred clubhouse, the screening room, in unprecedented numbers—unruly hordes of French school kids, armies of senior citizens, lots of *regular people*.

In a year in which mega-watt glamour was conspicuously absent, it was these regular people who hailed Anjelica Huston as if she were Madonna when introducing *Bastard Out of Carolina* in the Un Certain Regard (A Certain Regard) section of the festival. They also treated John Sayles to a thunderous ovation when his *Lone Star* opened the Quinzaine de Realisateurs (Director's Fortnight) in the cavernous theater of the Noga Hilton. Sayles sat in the audience a few days later when the omnipresent Steve Buscemi (appearing in competition entries *Kansas City*, by Robert Altman, and *Fargo*, by the Coen brothers, plus his own *Trees Lounge* in the Quinzaine) responded to a cult-hero's welcome with heartfelt thanks, and dedicated the premiere of the semi-autobiographical *Trees Lounge* to his wife. Critics were hardly so generous to most of these films. With the exception of Joel Coen's win for Best Director, Americans did not shine at Cannes for the second year in a row, perhaps in the cosmic scheme of things still required to do penance for past triumphs, including Quentin Tarantino's Palme d'Or.

Even so, American independents, large and small, had an established and business-like visibility. Their films this year included Greg Mottola's *The Daytrippers* and Barry J. Hershey's *The Empty Mirror* premiering in the Semaine de la Critique (International Critics' Week), Paul Thomas Anderson's *Sydney* bowing in A Certain Regard, and veteran Arthur Penn's *Inside* in the Quinzaine. In the concurrent market, there was The Independent's Showcase, a relatively low-budget option for establishing a market presence, run by Sandy Mandleberger. This year it provided screenings of more than a dozen American features, including *All's Fair in Love and War*, by Sartaj Khan, *Angel's Tide*, by Woody Keith, *A Gun for Jennifer*, by Todd Morris, and *The Unveiling*, by Rodney Evans. In all, it's easy to forget how far American independents have come in terms of visibility in the years since Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies and videotape* won the Palme d'Or in 1989.

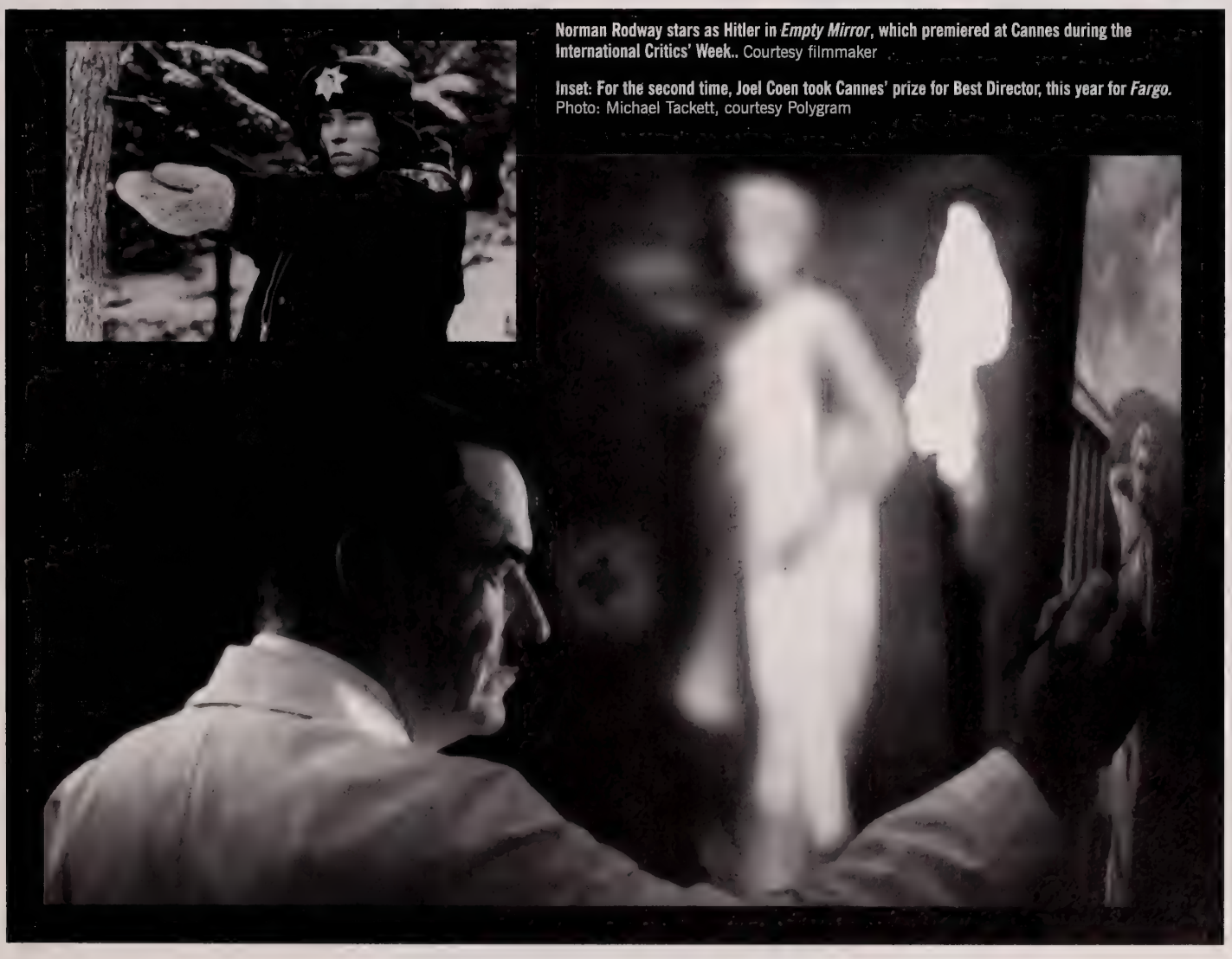
For less established Americans with films in official sections of the festival, the closest many come to having a press conference is the annual panel of independent directors organized by the Independent Feature Project (IFP) and chaired by Roger Ebert. Usually attracting turnaway crowds, the event was formerly held in the American Pavilion. This year it took place in the *Variety* Pavilion and featured the American directors with films in the festival, including Altman, Penn, and Sayles. For the first time in memory, no schedule or press release about the event was distributed through press mailboxes, the most common and effective method of reaching journalists. This created confusion among many Americans concerning when, where, or even if the panel was taking place. Michelle Byrd of the IFP cited ads in *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter* as publicity, although at a festival in which half a dozen daily trade papers clog the lobbies of every hotel, small ads are easily overlooked. One participating director expressed disappointment in the turnout, but Byrd reported attendance of 150, and was only sorry so few

TV crews showed up, due, she says, to a time conflict with the Al Pacino press conference for *Looking for Richard*.

One of the most talked-about American films at Cannes turned out to be the low-budget *The Daytrippers*. This debut feature by director Greg Mottola is a comedy that evolves into a drama in the course of a suburban Long Island family's trek to Manhattan to sniff out a son-in-law's suspected adultery.

The story behind *The Daytrippers* sounds like every aspiring director's dream come true. Unknown to Mottola, his short student film *Swingin' in the Painter's Room* (1989) was sent by an agent to Steven Soderbergh and by another contact to producer Nancy Tenenbaum, the team that made *sex, lies and videotape*. "We were impressed with his talent," Soderbergh said in a phone interview, and the two decided to call let him shoot *Daytrippers* using the same equipment Soderbergh was renting for his own film *The Underneath*, since the offer was contingent upon Mottola moving his independent production to Texas. He agonized somewhat more over a decision to turn down producer James L. Brooks' eleventh hour offer to take the film to Tri-Star, but ultimately didn't want to risk the unknown or lose his independence.

Mottola expected his Cannes experience to



Norman Rodway stars as Hitler in *Empty Mirror*, which premiered at Cannes during the International Critics' Week.. Courtesy filmmaker

Inset: For the second time, Joel Coen took Cannes' prize for Best Director, this year for *Fargo*. Photo: Michael Tackett, courtesy Polygram

The ensemble cast, which includes Hope Davis, Stanley Tucci, Parker Posey, and Campbell Scott (who was also an executive producer), is headed by Anne Meara, whose wacky and comically grating performance as a domineering matriarch anchors the film. *The Daytrippers* was rejected by Sundance because they had "too many comedies," according to Mottola, but went on to win the Jury Prize at the concurrent renegade festival, Slamdance.

Mottola and offer help with a feature project. An early script Mottola developed at the Sundance Screenwriters' Lab was eventually put aside in favor of "something that could be done as guerilla filmmaking," he says. "I started with the image of a family trapped in a car." *Daytrippers* was shot on Super 16 in 18 days and used such no-budget locations as his parents' house and, of course, a beat-up station wagon.

Mottola turned down Soderbergh's offer to

get off to a rocky start when he realized that his first audience consisted largely of hundreds of local pre-teens, but they settled down once the story got underway, because, he notes, "oppressive family stuff is universal." Mottola has only raves for the organization of Critic's Week, which scheduled nine official screenings for *The Daytrippers* and continues to arrange tours for its roster around the world. During Cannes, the film was sold to France, Italy, Japan, and the

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Laura Esquivel, Author & Screenwriter, *Like Water for Chocolate*

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Benelux countries for "more money than we could have reasonably expected for a little American film," says Mottola, but he expresses disillusionment over still not being able to line up a U.S. distributor. "I made a film with some human interest and value, and it's like trying to get blood from a stone to get it seen."

An unnamed "Film Surprise," or *surpreeze*, as the French call it, was on the menu the last day of Cannes. What a *surpreeze* it was—an ultra-low budget, decidedly bizarre comedy called *Schizopolis*, by Steven Soderbergh, starring the director himself. Harvey Weinstein and the Miramax entourage, along with virtually every other distributor remaining in Cannes, trekked up the Palais steps to check it out, although many were spotted leaving not far into the film, which is a challenging, fragmented narrative that pingpongs between sophomoric humor and Godardian wit. Soderbergh, who did not attend the festival, says he made *Schizopolis* because he was "feeling stagnated" and describes it as "structured like a dream: everything is connected, but not necessarily in a linear way."

As a former Palme winner, Soderbergh ranks as a Cannes immortal, so anonymously springing this particular film on the international festival audience comes across as remarkably gutsy and undoubtedly the most independent gesture made by an American director showcasing his work at Cannes this year. Filmed in his hometown of Baton Rouge, with lots of favors called in, he financed it through a pre-sale of U.S. video rights and reports that he made it for "less than one-fifth the budget of *sex, lies and videotape*." While he's actively seeking theatrical distribution, Soderbergh confides cryptically, "I have some very odd ideas about how to sell it." But he seems relatively unconcerned about the distribution challenge it faces, saying, "I've already gotten out of [the film] what I needed to get out of it personally."

Mottola suggests that his mentor's *Schizopolis* represents a landmark, because it's the first film in which a director has portrayed himself masturbating onscreen. To this, Soderbergh responds with a laugh. "I was tired of people doing it figuratively. I thought it was time to step up and be upfront about it." Possibly Cannes festival director Gilles Jacob had sentiments like this in mind when he selected his "film surprise."

Barbara Scharres is director of the Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a freelance writer.

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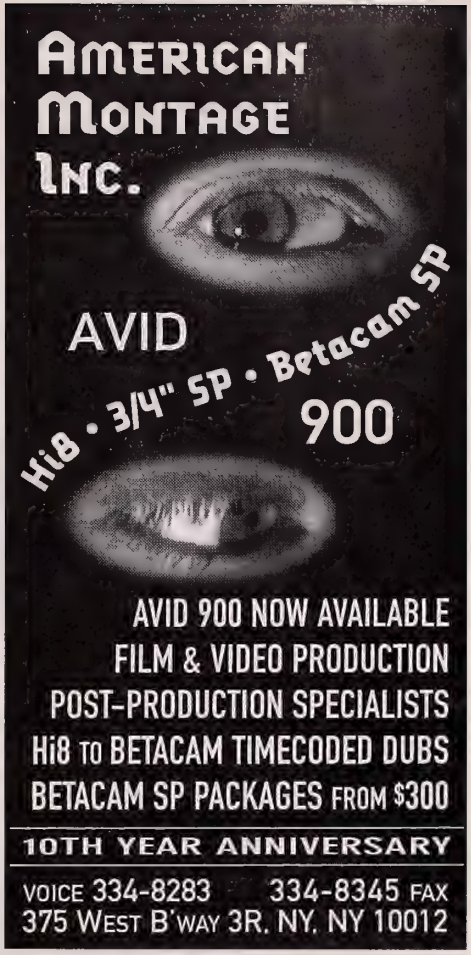
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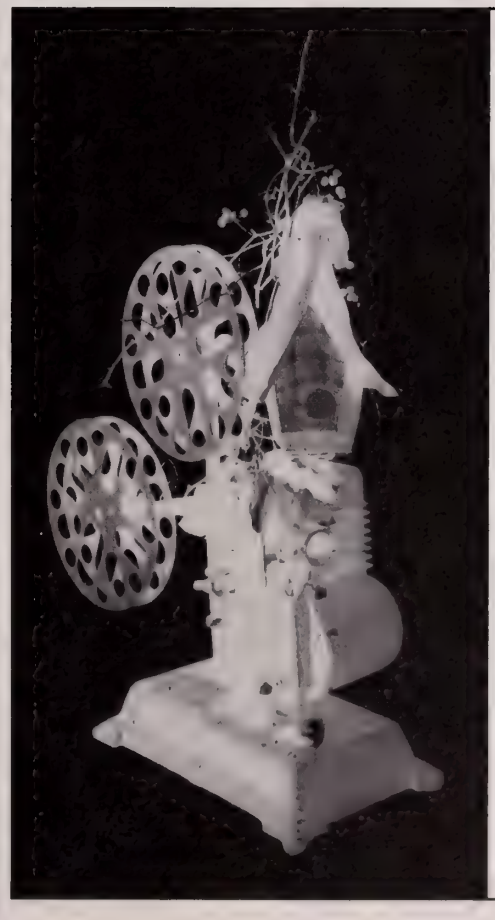
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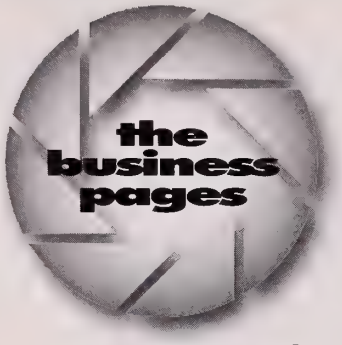


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Why the independent film channels struggle to find a home on cable

Get a Load of the Competition

BY SHELLEY GABERT

TWO OF THE MOST DARING AND PROGRESSIVE new film channels may be the best television you'll never see. Despite raves from cable operators, clever marketing, and even corporate support, both the Independent Film Channel and the Sundance Channel are having a hell of a time finding homes on cable.

The Independent Film Channel, managed and operated by the Bravo Cable Network, was launched in September 1994. The Sundance Channel, which is managed and operated by Showtime, entered the market last February. At last count, the Independent Film Channel has 5.5 million subscribers; the Sundance Channel, about 4 million. And not all of those numbers represent cable subscribers; almost half of Sundance's viewers and 1 million of the Independent Film Channel's come courtesy of satellite providers known as Direct Broadcast Systems (DBS). All told, the channels reach only three to four percent of the 70 million homes in the U.S.

So what's the problem? Both Kathleen Dore, executive vice president and general manager for Bravo/IFC, and Sundance Channel president Nora Ryan say their respective channels were developed to serve the public's growing interest in independent films. Unfortunately, the dilemma is less in viewers' desires and more in cable systems' space. Most cable systems don't have room for new channels, and rebuilding to expand capacity could take years. This puts a cable provider's two or three "spare" channels at a premium. That prime space is often filled with broad-appeal services like The History Channel or ESPN2 that cable operators say make rate increases easier to swallow.

There are cable operators who argue that "arty" channels like IFC and the Sundance Channel have a narrow focus appropriate only in more sophisticated markets or those with huge university populations. However, cable operators who have launched the channels say they find themselves flipping to them constantly. "They jump out from the screen. They are like nothing else on cable," says Dusty Matthews, manager of Marcus Cable, which carries both channels and serves an affluent Dallas suburb.

Ryan says this sort of admiration reflects her confidence that the indie cable market exists. "This isn't just a New York/LA thing," says Ryan from her offices in New York.

To prove the appeal of its content, the Sundance Channel developed a list of 100 independent films and then promoted them with "Sundance Channel Recommends" promotional cards at 2,500 Blockbuster Video stores across the country. The results showed that stores with high rentals were in every part of the country, and included rural, urban, and mid-sized markets.

The Sundance Channel even brought cable operator programming executives from across the country to attend the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, this past January. It seemed a sure-fire method to prove the film channel's audience worthiness: the festival screened the types of films that will ultimately play on either Independent Film Channel or the Sundance Channel, and the executives saw first-hand how frenetic the audiences were to find a seat.

However, the consensus of the executives was, while the festival was impressive and meeting Redford exciting,, that doesn't affect the issue of whether demand is high enough to make the channel "deserve" the all-too-rare space.

Survey says...

If a channel is going to make the cable operator's cut, there has to be proof of customers' demand. Most cable operators' customer service departments keep tally of subscribers' channel requests and, when free space is available, the operator lets subscribers vote on the most-requested channels by phone or mail. Only some operators allow subscribers to vote on all available channels.

Since people are more likely to vote for a channel if they know it exists, the indie film channels are frequently promoted on their parent channels. Systems that carry Bravo are more likely to hear subscribers request IFC, thanks to Bravo's IFC promotional nights. And Showtime runs promotional spots that focus on movies from the Sundance Film Festival that are in the theater, on video, and on the Sundance Channel.

Some operators like to cast a wider net. Ruth Blank, director of marketing and cus-

tomer service for Sacramento Cable, uses surveys that include descriptions of new services, even if they haven't been frequently requested. Her most recent survey included both of the new film channels, and they were among the top-ranked channels launched this past March.

Others forgo surveys. "You don't need a survey to tell you that smart people want smart movies," says Matthews, who find the channels a perfect match to her Dalals subscribers' taste levels.

Of course, the passion one person feels for independent film channels may be what another feels for Turner's Financial News Network. Faced with highly subjective consumer tastes, cable programming executives often move toward the lowest common denominator. The Golf Channel, which features old tournaments and a deluge of commercials for golf balls, bags, and shoes, is a channel that many operators admit is a weak product, yet it's often selected over the film channels. It's as if the operators don't want to take responsibility for determining what's a good product.

"This may sound pretentious, but if you're going to carry a lot of the other stuff, you have a responsibility to carry something that is culturally enriching in some way," says Independent Film Channel board member Steven Soderbergh. The channel recently backed his film *Gray's Anatomy*, which will have its television premiere on the channel after its theatrical release. "We've lost that sense of cultural obligation, the idea that even if a channel isn't a blockbuster, it's something that we should allow to take time to build an audience."

Let's make a deal

Subscriber straw polls aren't the only factor that determines which channel gets an empty slot; it also depends on how much programmers can sweeten a deal. Some programmers reward operators with lower rates and other privileges; others offer a service to the operator free for one to five years. The Independent Film Channel made a deal with a major operator, Cox Communications, that "guarantees" an additional one million subscribers in 1997.

Other factors in the game of finding channel space include governmental regulations for public and leased access, must-carry laws, and retransmission consent agreements.

"We don't have complete freedom in programming our channels. Our arms are tied in many ways," says Richard Aurelio, president of Time Warner's New York City cable group.



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Another bind is when channel space becomes a bargaining chip. In a retransmission agreement, cable operators must offer local broadcasters some kind of compensation in order to carry their signals, and additional channel space is the most common currency. For example, NBC negotiated with Time Warner to have the cable operator carry the NBC-owned America's Talking Channel. They now do, although Aurelio describes it as a weak product.

Occasionally, Aurelio says he does go to battle. Many operators agreed to carry the fX Channel in order to gain the local Fox affiliate, but Time Warner wouldn't bow to the pressure. While this type of agreement is being challenged in the Supreme Court, there may not be any legal decisions made until next year.

Elbowing for room

Unlike many operators, Time Warner has yanked weaker channels off the air to free channel space, a move that most operators shy away from. The Nostalgia Channel and New Sport were 86'd in favor of the SciFi Channel. The Video Jukebox was dropped and The History Channel took its place.

Then there's the problem of the volume of niche competition. In the past few months alone, Aurelio has had meetings with the Woman's Sports Network, the World African Network, Ovation, Soap TV, Pet TV, Parenthood Channel, the Cowboy Channel, the Food Channel, and the Travel Channel, all asking for distribution.

"Until cable operators are like a bookstore and are able to offer everything to everybody, we won't ever know what will sell," says Matthews.

Unfortunately, more choice means more costs, and raising rates is a very sensitive issue for most operators. "We don't want to be the gatekeepers, but due to the current technology we have to be middlemen stuck between an overwhelming supply of product and demand," says one cable company's general manager. "Diversity is great if you've got the technology to be all things to all people."

New technology... any moment now

According to Aurelio, the industry itself must take some of the blame for the current channel crunch. "I think what hurt a lot of programmers was reading articles three or four years ago that digital technology would create an explosion in channel capacity. There's been a huge gap between the rhetoric of the technology addicts and the reality. Digitial technology is not here and the hardware to implement it continues to be delayed and delayed."

Digital technology aside, cable operators across the country are investing millions of dollars in rebuilds that will expand channel capacity. Time Warner customers could see an increase in channel capacity by the end of 1997, with room for all the film channels.

"Right now, we're trying to do the best we can with what we've got," says Aurelio.

"But right now is good," says Sundance Channel's Ryan. "We're heading into an era that will work for both niche channels and the consumer. Cable is no longer the only distribution system."

The fact that there are a number of contenders for the cable audience is perhaps the best hope for getting to see independent film channels. DBS systems were once a cable stepchild, but they have seen tremendous growth. These systems, which include DirecTv, USSB, DISH Network, and PRIMESTAR, promote themselves as offering more choice and more channels, and may reach more than 12 million homes in the next few years.

Then there's the telcos, or telephone companies, that will eventually offer cable. [See 'The Telecommunications Act Says *That*?' p. 9]. And wireless companies like Liberty Cable provide programming via rooftop dishes to 40,000 subscribers in apartment complexes throughout New York City. Liberty president Peter Price says the company will expand to other cities in the near future.

Both the Independent Film Channel and the Sundance Channel continue to pursue all outlets, and they urge consumers to assist by making as much noise as possible. However, if you've called or written letters and still feel ignored by the cable company; if you're fed up with trying to rent Blockbuster's only copy of *Vanya on 42 Street* when you know it's on the Sundance Channel; if Bravo's Independent Film Channel teases only leave you frustrated; if you're feeling as mad as hell and are not going to take it anymore, you don't have to scream out your window like *Network*'s Peter Finch. You can buy a satellite system. The cable operators will hear that loud and clear.

Shelley Gabert is a freelance writer in St. Louis, MO.

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Mixing and Matching Public and Private

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

YOU'RE FUNDRAISING FOR A DOCUMENTARY ON the endangered Spotted Owl. So far, you've managed to get a small grant from your local state arts council. Applications are pending at a few foundations. And you've finally convinced Uncle Harry to give $10,000 to the project and think you could successfully twist the arms of a few other friends and relatives.

Before going any further, a prudent filmmaker needs to determine whether Uncle Harry's money is an investment or a donation. And while it's possible to mix the two forms of financing on a given project, there are things one needs to know before depositing that $10,000 check.

"It's very difficult for any project, except a very low-budget project, to be funded solely on grants," says Daniel Mayer, former executive director of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts in New York and a consultant to nonprofit organizations. "If [mediamakers] do combine grants, donations, and investments, they must be clear with the donors about their expectations for these funds and whether they are donations or investments."

Otherwise, there can be trouble down the road not only with your financial backers, but also with the Internal Revenue Service. To understand how and why, one has to start with a few basic principles about fiscal sponsors, those vital links to the grant world.

Fiscal sponsors

Many mediamakers first become acquainted with the concept of a fiscal sponsor when applying for a grant from the public agencies, like the New York State Council on the Arts, or a private foundation. Many of these agencies are prohibited from giving funds directly to individuals, so artists who have not incorporated as a tax-exempt entity must find a nonprofit organization willing to serve as a "fiscal sponsor" (also known as "fiscal agent," "umbrella organization," and "conduit"). The fiscal sponsor is technically the grant applicant; it acts as the funnel through which federal or state dollars flow, usually keeping a small percentage of the grant for administrative costs.

Fiscal sponsors can also play a role when soliciting funds from individuals. Contributions to a film via the fiscal sponsor are treated as tax-deductible donations under state and federal tax laws. This, of course, can be a powerful incentive to use when fundraising, especially for a project that is not expected to be a money-maker and therefore is not attractive to investors hoping for a financial return.

Any nonprofit organization can be approached to serve as a fiscal sponsor—a public charity, a private foundation, a nonprofit arts organization. The key is to have an appropriate match. "Each situation is fact-specific, so it's difficult to generalize," says Mayer. "You have to ask what is the purpose of the nonprofit, and whether there is a good fit between the project and the sponsor's goals." A good fit would be a film on coal mining and a nonprofit organization concerned with the health and safety of coal miners. Similarly, asking Greenpeace to serve as fiscal sponsor for the Spotted Owl project would make sense.

"The less likely that a project will attract conventional investors, the more likely a nonprofit can financially participate in that project."

Trouble Ahead

What wouldn't work would be to have Greenpeace act as fiscal sponsor on your cheesy B-flick *Vengeance of the Amazon Cheerleaders*. And if Uncle Harry gives money to this project through Greenpeace and gets a tax deduction, there could be trouble ahead. Such arrangements may be construed by the IRS as "earmarking," or more colloquially, "laundering."

If the IRS determines that Uncle Harry is simply trying to get a write-off for funding a non-tax-exempt project through a nonprofit fiscal sponsor, he could lose his deduction. But worse, the fiscal sponsor could run into major trouble. If the IRS determines that the sponsor violated laws relating to tax-exempt organizations, the sponsor could face "excise taxes" for failing to properly evaluate the activities of a sponsored project and could even lose their tax-exempt status, especially if the sponsor is supporting activities unrelated to its tax-exempt purpose.

Some tax specialists say it's prudent to take an alternate route when you're dealing with relatives. Gregory L. Colvin, a San Francisco attorney who specializes in working with nonprofit organizations, cautions that contributions by relatives through a fiscal sponsor may be subject to closer federal tax scrutiny. "The relative's contribution could be considered a private investment instead of a donation," he says. Colvin recommends that a relative's contribution might be better offered as a gift to the mediamaker, subject to federal gift taxation laws.

There are other sponsorship relationships that may also serve as the basis for IRS scrutiny. In one case a filmmaker entered into a sponsorship agreement with a nonprofit media organization that took a routine administrative fee. On top of that, however, the nonprofit also regarded the donations it received on behalf of the mediamaker as its own "investment" in the project and planned to take a percentage of the project's profits.

There was no clear violation of the tax laws here. However, it could raise some questions: Does the sponsor's "investment" negate the donative intent of those who con-

tributed money? Is this consistent with or does it overreach the sponsor's tax-exempt purposes? Again, if the IRS cries foul, the sponsor's tax-exempt status could be placed in dispute and the sponsor subjected to taxes on unrelated income.

Attorney Dan Mayer does not see any difficulties with a sponsor receiving administrative fees and/or royalties. As he points out, nonprofit theaters frequently develop and produce plays that are subsequently produced as commercial ventures, from which they will receive some royalties. For example, the nonprofit Eureka Theater and the Public Theater first produced Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* and *A Chorus Line*, respectively, plays that subsequently moved on to commercial Broadway stages. "For these nonprofits, such monies serve as a major source of income," he says. (Other nonprofit organizations form for-profit affiliates or subsidiaries.)

Different questions arise in the following case. A mediamaker entered in to a sponsorship agreement with a small nonprofit theater. Although the sponsor was not to receive a fee, it would receive a credit in all promotional materials, benefit screenings, and in a seminar conducted by the mediamaker. In addition, the sponsor would own the stage rights.

Upon closer inspection, the sponsor's attorney observed that the agreement could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, given the fact that a significant portion of the donations received by the sponsor would be in connection with the mediamaker's project. The attorney feared that this would give the erroneous impression that the sponsor's major activity was financing the film, rather than promoting the theater. Eventually the sponsorship arrangement was changed to a loan, which the mediamaker would repay from the project's profits, if any.

Avoiding the pitfalls

A fiscal sponsor should not be an afterthought. As attorney Colvin explains, "It's usually better to get a fiscal sponsor involved early in the process—when there is a need for money for developing a script and establishing the sponsorship relationship—than coming to a sponsor later, when it looks like you tacked on the sponsor to get the donations."

Mayer concurs, noting that donations through a sponsor often provide the funds necessary to develop a treatment, write a script, or produce the footage that will bring a project from development to production.

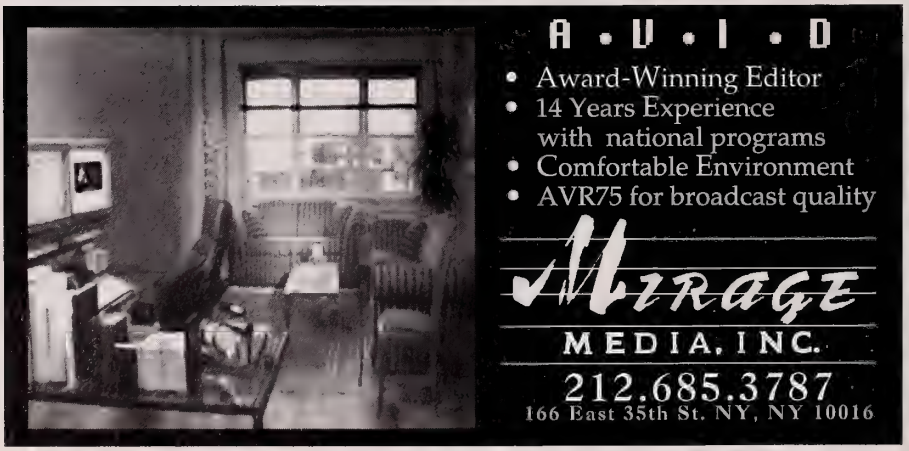
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ness of a sponsor/mediamaker match, says Colvin, is the project's degree of commerciality. "The less likely that a project will attract conventional investors, the more likely a nonprofit can [financially participate] in that project."

As soon as a mediamaker locates a fiscal sponsor, the two need to hammer out a fiscal sponsorship agreement. To demonstrate their good faith effort to comply with the tax laws, they should memorialize this relationship in writing. It should be structured so that 1) the sponsor exercises sufficient supervision over the funds being donated to the sponsor on behalf of the mediamaker; and 2) the contributed funds further the tax-exempt purposes of the fiscal sponsor as stated in its charter.

The agreement should indicate how the sponsor will exercise "control" or "supervision" of the donated funds. Examples of control include provisions on 1) how a sponsor will collect, monitor, and disburse contributions to the mediamaker; 2) whether a sponsor will keep the funds in a separate account or in a general account for the benefit of several recipients; 3) whether a sponsor establishes record-keeping and reporting requirements with which a recipient must comply before the sponsor releases the funds; and 4) whether a sponsor has the right to redirect funds to another recipient if the mediamaker either fails to complete the project or acts in a manner that would jeopardize the sponsor's tax-exempt status. In general, one needs to negate the impression that the sponsor's main responsibility is just to "cut the check."

The sponsor and mediamaker also need to work out exactly how the sponsor will be compensated for administration, overhead, and other services (e.g., providing office space). Compensation can be a fixed amount or a percentage of the funds raised through the sponsor (generally three to 10 percent). This, too, should be included in the contract.

Working all this out at the start protects both parties. As Mayer notes, "Many small organizations don't have the staff and system to keep track of the money from different sources to different projects, and that's where problems arise. A sponsor must include the project and the sponsorship arrangement in its fiscal statements."

Variations on a theme

Another kind of financial relationship between fiscal sponsors and funders is the "donor-advised" fund. This generally originates when an individual wants to set up a grant-giving

apparatus and arranges with a nonprofit to act as the facilitator and nonprofit sponsor. In this situation, the donor makes a contribution to the sponsor with the understanding that the donor can recommend who receives money from the donor's fund. Donors generally have a reasonable expectation that those projects preapproved by the sponsor actually further its purpose. To avoid being declared a mere "conduit" by the IRS, a donor's choice of funding recipient must be regarded as non-binding advice to the sponsor. Technically, the donor must relinquish control of its contribution to the sponsor.

A donor-advised fund is *not* the route to go if a filmmaker has already found someone willing to donate money to his or her project (like Uncle Harry) and the two are simply looking for a nonprofit intermediary. It is appropriate if Uncle Harry wants to help fund films on, say, the environment and has the nonprofit sponsor administer the grant (e.g., facilitate the call for entries, process the applications, perhaps preview tapes, etc.). You can even put in your own application, if you and Uncle Harry understand that it's the nonprofit sponsor who has the final word on which grants are approved, and that your film must further the nonprofit sponsor's purpose.

Another financing option involving a fiscal sponsor is the "program-related investment" (PRI). The IRS permits sponsors to offer repayable loans or even investments in a project instead of giving outright grants. According to attorney Gregory Colvin, PRIs are generally given to projects that lack commercial prospects. Under the PRI scenario, a nonprofit organization dealing with the health and safety of coal miners, for instance, could offer loans to or invest in a film on coal-mining health hazards. If this investment produces significant income for the sponsor, this is acceptable; the IRS would not consider it conclusive evidence of the sponsor not adhering to its tax-exempt purpose.

Here, as in all the cases touched on above, there are numerous points in the relationship between a sponsor and a mediamaker that can be murky, so it is always wise to hammer out a sponsorship agreement first. This protects the producer, the donor, the sponsor—and the project.

Robert L. Seigel is a NYC entertainment attorney and a principal in the Cinema Film Consulting firm.

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Our writer, put through the wringer. Photo: Tom LeGofff

BY IRA ISRAEL

MY LIFE AS A DOG

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF AN ASPIRING DIRECTOR

So you've just finished the final first draft of a screenplay that you'd like to direct, and your next task is to find a producer. Maybe you've gone to film school, maybe you've made a short film, maybe you haven't—it doesn't matter. If your uncle is not a studio head, then we're in the same boat.

I spent most of 1995 "developing" my first independent feature film as if it were a full-time job. It is. Supposedly I've done everything "right," or at least that's what I keep hearing. Although my project could go into preproduction any day now, I don't feel much closer to making the film than I was a year ago. However, I consider the time I've spent—as well as the thousands of dollars on copies, telephone calls, faxes, business meals, research, and postage—to be the equivalent of a course on how to get a low-budget independent film off the ground as a first-time writer/director. Here are the six basic steps I've learned.

#1. Call everybody, big or small.

When you're trying to get your project off of the ground, you cannot afford to be shy. Ask everyone you know. Go to the library, bookstore, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the Independent Feature Project, and get lists of producers: independent producers, executive producers, individual investors, studios—you can't afford to leave any stone unturned. Find out who they are and what they've done. Ask professional, intelligent questions about the company's or individual's interests, the type of material they're looking for, and if they read unsolicited scripts.

Ninety percent of producers have an emotional bodyguard, usually in the form of a young female receptionist (they're almost never males) who wields her phone like a mighty scepter. She has been trained to say two things: "Hello. We don't accept unsolicited material," and, when you inquire about how to get material solicited, she'll reply, "It must come through an agent or attorney. Good-bye."

To the bodyguard's credit I will say this: Most production companies are besieged with lunatics calling, recounting complete fabrications, being rude, and asking inane questions. You don't want to be perceived this way.

You must understand that this receptionist is wrong. She has been paid and trained to allow the producers to avoid speaking with you. Very few production companies accept only material through agents or attorneys. The key is getting past the bodyguard.

#2. Never send anybody anything unless it is specifically requested.

Not once, not ever. No "Oh, let's just see what happens...." I'll tell you what happens: it goes directly into the garbage. Producers know what they want to see and are already overwhelmed by the material they solicit. You don't need to waste your hard-earned money just to receive a letter stating, "Egg Pictures does not accept unsolicited material. We return it to you unread. Best of luck with all of your future endeavors!"

#3. Break the "unsolicited manuscripts" barrier.

The first step to getting your screenplay solicited is to know it inside and out. Know how to speak about it. Know how to pitch it in one sentence. Know who your potential audience is. Then know how to describe all of the major plot twists in a few key phrases.

Be as precise and confident as possible and try not to refer to other films. The jokes from the first scene of Robert Altman's *The Player* are funny because they are real. You have no idea how many people call up producers and say, "It's *Forrest Gump* meets *The Godfather* meets *City Slickers*." Don't do it—you'll sound stupid and inexperienced. You'll sound even more stupid and inexperienced if you cite films such as *sex, lies and videotape*, *The Brothers McMullen*, or *Clerks*, because these independent break-out films are anomalies. For each of these success stories there are probably a hundred films—possibly even films of similar quality—that never got domestic distribution and/or lost large amounts of money.

Have a realistic budget in mind. When you're just starting out, nobody expects you to have hired a line producer and drafted a 10- or 20-page budget; however, know the budgets of movies that have a similar look, feel, number of principal actors, and number of locations and be able to give a ballpark figure (without referring to these films).

Know who's in charge of development, even though you won't be able to speak to her. This is the "D-girl," the film industry's term for the development person (again, who is almost always female). Like the bodyguard, she is paid to shield the higher orders from pests like you. It's not that she doesn't have power, it's just that she's not going to use it to help you. Helping you would mean risking her job, health insurance, and limited expense account.

Nonetheless, try your best to meet her. Here's the reason: it's more difficult to reject a face than a name. If there's a face with the project (preferably your face), then maybe she will be so kind as to print a copy of Rejection Letter #2 (which starts off positive) or actually call you to tell you, "It's not for us at this time."

But you'll never meet her unless she's already the friend of a friend. So you write letters, send faxes, do anything to get her to read your screenplay. Letters should be exquisitely written, without any grammatical or typographical errors. You're essentially telling her that it is worth her time to read your work; the letter is obviously a sample of your writing style and ability, so make it as articulate, forthright, and honest as possible.

You must convince her that you're the flavor of the month and she's missing out if she doesn't sign you right then and there.

Then lie like a rug. Not about the nature of the project but about who you're "approaching," who's "reading" the screenplay, who's "considering" the project. You're marketing yourself, and you must entice her into wanting to read your work. The best way to do this is to use the same marketing technique that film, record, book companies use: *Over a gazillion people have seen our movie, heard our record, read our book—why are you missing out, are you a complete loser?!*

If she is blatantly not interested in your project, then ask if she knows who might be interested. Most development people will gladly give you the names of some competitors and enemies whose valuable time she would like you to waste. She'll probably say, "Sounds more like a project for Goldwyn than for us." Then you'll spend a day finding out that Samuel Goldwyn went belly-up. However, sometimes the suggestions will actually help you because then you can call the competing development person and insinuate that you're in discussions with the other company: "I just got off the phone with Violet Rose over in development at Miramax and I thought I'd give you a call...."

An even longer shot is to try to get a reputable agent to represent your work. I've earned my living for the past five years working on screenplays for films that have been produced for amounts ranging from $13 million to $85 million, and I wrote

and directed an award-winning short. Yet only once has an agent accepted my phone call and agreed to meet with me. After a few weeks, he sent a one-line letter stating that my work did not "grip" him.

Here's what you need to know about agents:

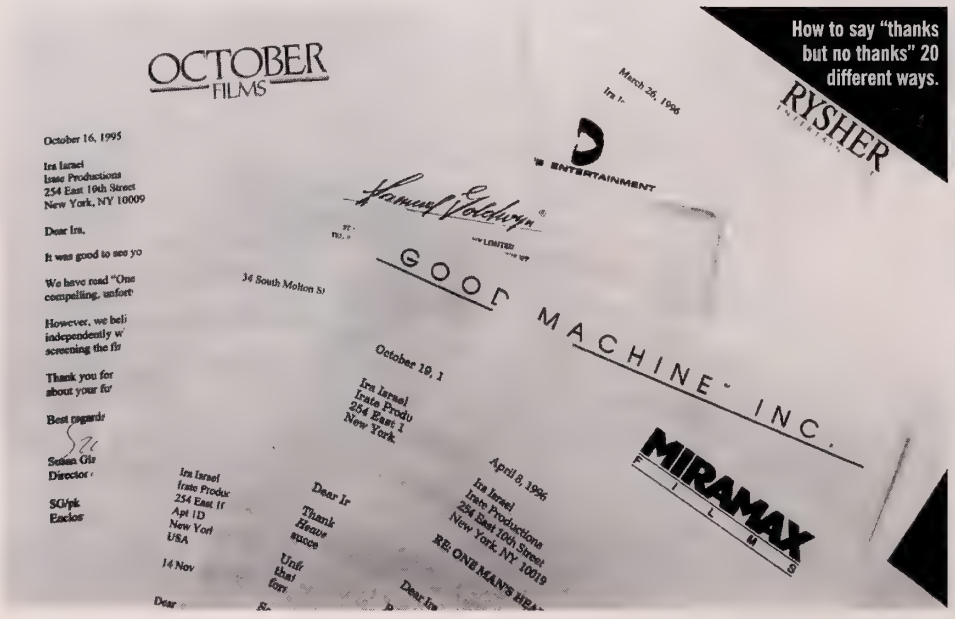
A. Let the agents come to you.

B. Scorsese's rule that you don't need an agent unless you're earning more than $100,000 is valid.

C. Even if you sign with a powerful agent, s/he probably won't have the time or inclination to do anything for you until you get your own work. This is the first Catch-22 of the entertainment industry: "I can't get the gig I'm looking for without an agent—an agent won't sign me unless I'm already working on a high-profile gig." It's almost as much fun as trying to sign with the WGA or DGA.

#4. What to do when someone finally agrees to read your screenplay.

If the company finally agrees to read your screenplay, this actually means that the company will pay $40 to $90 for someone—with credentials not unlike yourself—to do "coverage" on it. This is the second line of defense for the producers after their bodyguard/receptionist, in which some jealous wannabe screenwriter reads your screenplay, writes a two-page synopsis, and critiques the shit out of it.



I've never seen or heard about favorable coverage. If you're ever privy to a film company's files, spend an afternoon just for fun reading coverage on screenplays submitted to them. Ninety percent of the categories will be checked "fair" or "poor" with a few seemingly random "average" checks under character development or dialogue so the reader maintains the guise of objectivity or even leniency. Don't get distraught over bad coverage: Paid readers must constantly assert their intelligence, and the only way to do this is to be condescending and overly critical.

Regarding releases: most of the better companies (those that have been around long enough to have already been sued) will ask you to sign a release before they agree to read your work. Releases are perfunctory because they are non-negotiable; just sign them and send them back with the screenplay.

Okay, so you've written a "Thank you for agreeing to read my screenplay" letter, and put it in a nice envelope with a fresh copy of your bound masterpiece and your well-padded résumé. I suggest sending it by first-class mail unless the project is so hot that the producer is willing to give you his or her FedEx number or send a messenger. This happens occasionally and it'll make you feel good, but it doesn't mean that they're going to look at your project any sooner; it just means that it's going to sit there longer (and so are you). Important: save all your postage and copy receipts or your accountant will slay you.

Next comes the first follow-up phone call: "I'm just calling to make sure you received the screenplay." Of course they received it, but nonetheless after a week or so call in order to gauge how fast they'll do coverage on it and when you can expect to hear from them.

Nothing important happens in the film industry via mail. The only thing that you'll ever receive in your mailbox from a production company will be a rejection letter. All positive notifications happen by telephone. Thus, there's no need to run to your mailbox every day—no news really is good news.

More follow-up phone calls: "It's on the top of the pile" is what you'll most often hear. You can call once a week, maybe on Monday to see if she read it over the weekend or on Friday to subtly remind her to take it home. These calls won't and don't do you much good. Just sit tight.

There will be a time lapse of two or three days between the development person receiving the coverage and sending you your rejection letter. During this time if you have a conversation with the assistant, she may be so candid as to say, "Well, frankly, the coverage wasn't very strong." Which means that nobody read or will read your screenplay because "the coverage wasn't very strong." If this seems tautological, then you're starting to get the picture.

#5. Possible responses to your submission.

A. By mail: "Thank you for submitting _____ to us. While we found it compelling, it is not for us at this time. Best of luck with all your future endeavors!"

This is the response you will receive 90 percent of the time. The best you can hope for in this situation is that they return the screenplay with the rejection letter.

B. By telephone or fax: "We like it, but we can't do anything with it at this time."

Same as A.

C. By telephone: "We like it, but we can't do anything with it at this time. Keep us posted."

This is the second best answer you can hope for. The trouble is figuring out exactly what it means. It could mean that they would be willing to read a re-write or that they "can't go with a first-time director without talent attached" (more on this later). Most likely it means both.

D. The assistant calls you: "We'd like you to come in for a meeting. Are you available on Tuesday?"

This is cause for joy. Now you must spend the weekend taking a charm course and preparing answers for all of the many discrepancies and problems that the development person will find with your screenplay and all the excuses she will offer for not being able to produce it at this time.

E. The development person calls: "Let's do lunch."

You're ecstatic, you're elated—you can order anything you like. Even an appetizer. She really read it. She really likes it. Now you must spend the weekend taking a charm course and preparing answers for all of the many discrepancies and problems that she will find with your screenplay and all the excuses she will offer for not being able to produce it at this time.

F. The president of the company calls and offers you three million dollars for your original work and a first-look deal on your next screenplay.

Keep dreaming!

The negative responses you can decipher for yourself. Here's what to do if she actually reads your work and agrees to meet with you: be so professional it would make your mother's eyes bleed. Besides that, you must convince her that you're the flavor of the month and she's missing out if she doesn't sign you right then and there.

Key to your conversation: know what's universal and what's particular about your work—that is, why it's similar to what an audience has already loved, but what makes it sufficiently different (and preferably better) than that project or phenomenon.

Ninety percent of the time the meeting will end one of two ways: "Don't call us, we'll call you" or "Keep us informed." The other 10 percent of the time requires champagne.

"Don't call us, we'll call you" means that you flunked and should not expect to have any further contact with that company. This may not be (but probably is) a reflection on you as a human being. You'll never know.

Then there's always the possibility that the development person wanted to see you for another reason, such as developing one of her own projects, either on spec (for free) or for pay. I've often been asked at the end of a meeting to "look over" one of the company's properties. Once after a lengthy meeting with a producer about one of my screenplays, he simply said, "Y'know, I don't really care about your script, but I'd love for you to adapt this best-selling novel into a screenplay," which I did for WGA scale.

"Keep us informed" means that they want to make sure you're serious and dedicated and that they're 100 percent guaranteed not to lose their shirts. This means, "Come back when you've done our legwork for us and we're assured to make our money back," which directly translates into "We can't go with a first-time director without talent attached."

Even companies that reject your screenplay will become re-interested if you can provided a "bankable commodity," such as an A-list player. Thus, the responsibility falls upon the first-time director to "package" his or her project in the same manner that CAA would package a Tom Hanks/Ron Howard film to shop to Disney. However, most first-time directors don't have the same resources as CAA.

#6. Doing it yourself.

So you decide to produce your film yourself using a Limited Liability Corporation or a Limited Partnership. This may be the only viable way to independently produce your film. Beware: although some projects that you've probably heard about turn out very well for the investors, the company, and the filmmaker, the majority of LLCs and LPs aren't profitable.

The major problem lies not in raising the money and making the film—two things that definitely aren't easy—but in getting it distributed. What percentage of films on the festival circuit ever get distribution deals?

Here's why the problem may not lie with you or your work: theatrical distributors distribute films to a finite numbers of screens and their costs for marketing and putting your film on the screen are astronomical. Thus they're not willing or able to distribute films purely on the strength of their narratives or aesthetic content.

Here's why the problem may not lie with distributors: the ticket-paying public goes to see their favorite celebrities playing variations of well-established characters or personas. Our storytelling culture has been largely supplanted by a pop culture of personalities, where celebrities more often than not play psychological deviants or heroes who face psychological deviants. Stories no longer sell movies; familiar and sexy faces do.

Is there any way to entice distributors to take risks on unproven actors and directors? Not really.

So when attempting to get your feature off the ground without A-list talent attached, everybody is going to string you along without making a commitment until somebody else is willing to risk his or her career on your project. "We can't go with a first-time director without talent attached" means that you must beg various celebrities to sign on to your project for less than their usual rate and risk their names on your artistic integrity.

It all boils down to this: nobody will have enough faith in you to commit money to your project until somebody more successful has already staked his or her career on you. So the key to getting your project off the ground is finding the first noteworthy producer or bankable actor to have enough faith in your project to risk his or her career on you.

Simple, isn't it?

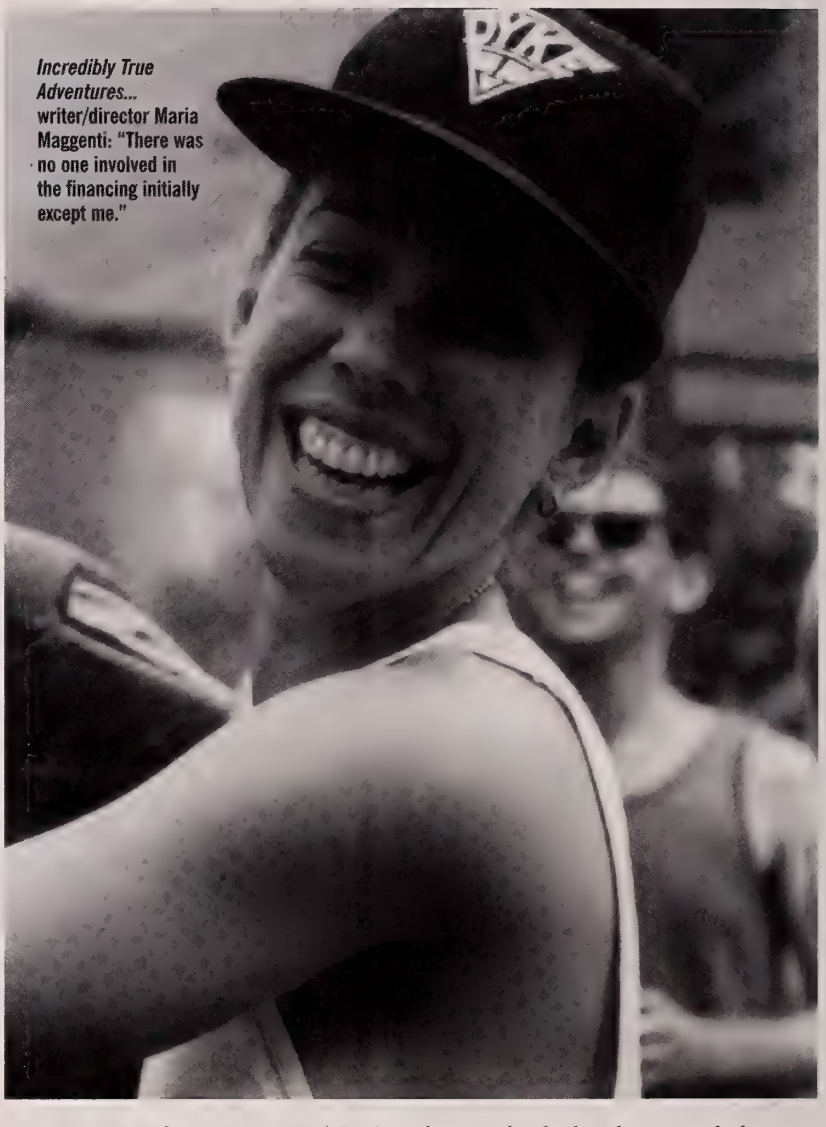
Ira Israel has worked on screenplays with Laurent Boutonnat, Chantal Akerman, Jean-Pierre Marois, Idrissa Ouedraogo, and with Luc Besson on The Professional *and* The Fifth Element, *starring Bruce Willis.*

A CASE STUDY *by*

Nothing but the truth:

The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love

Editor's note: *With this budget breakdown of* The Incredibly True Adventures..., *we introduce a semi-regular feature at* The Independent*—case studies that give the hard facts (and numbers) of successful productions* after *they're in the can.*



Incredibly True Adventures... **writer/director Maria Maggenti: "There was no one involved in the financing initially except me."**

ONE QUESTION INEVITABLY COMES UP AT EVERY FILMMAKER Q&A AND press conference: "What was your budget?" And there's good reason for that. Filmmakers are always in search of a reliable frame of reference when putting together their own production budgets.

Very often in these settings, however, information on the cost of a film is either a quick and thoughtless reply, or something calculated to be inaccurate in anticipation of negotiations with distributors. But usually such information is not made available at all.

To get a true picture of how much a movie costs, anyone asking should wait until all the contracts have been signed. Better yet, wait until the film is in video stores. That way, you can closely scrutinize the film—scene by scene, location by location—with budgetary data in hand.

In making *The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love*, director Maria Maggenti and producer Dolly Hall were able to get a lot of production mileage from their modest budget. Car shots, public locations, scenes with extras, dolly moves, brand new film stock—in short, a well-crafted and completely art-directed film by a full crew. How did they do it?

The Independent is grateful to Maggenti and Hall, who had to dig through all their production documents in order to provide us with just this sort of data. This, then, is how *The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love* was made in the summer of 1994.

The Independent: You spent $60,000 to get your film "in the can." How do you define "in the can?"

Maggenti: "In the can" means ready for editing. For us, that was 16mm dailies and the work print with all the sound transfers to mag stock.

The Independent: What, if any, deferrals does that figure include?

Maggenti: Practically nothing was deferred. New York post facility Sound One allowed us to edit on a deferral basis, and, for the amount of money we owed DuArt when we finished with principal photography, it might as well have been a deferral. We didn't finish paying these people off until we got money from the distributor [Fine Line Features, which released the film in June 1995].

The Independent: How was *Two Girls in Love* financed?

Maggenti: I took out a personal no-interest two-year loan from a man I knew. He is not in the film business, but he had disposable income—and he disposed some of it my way. That was our seed money: $35,000. The rest came from Dolly Hall, our producer, and a couple of $5,000 investments from women involved in the shooting of the film.

The Independent: So you didn't go the Limited Partnership or incorporation route?

Maggenti: A Limited Partnership would have taken up too much time and cost too much. There was no one involved in the financing initially except me. I went to this guy, and he wrote me a check. I had a friend from college who had just passed the bar exam write up a promissory note, which we both signed, then I deposited the check.

The motivation in all of this was to move fast. Dolly and I, and [associate producer] Melissa Painter and [co-producer] John Rath, all shook hands on Memorial Day weekend, 1994, and I called "action" at 8 a.m. on July 28, 1994. It was a gamble to tell the guy I borrowed the money from that I would get it all back to him in 24 months. However, I did just that.

The Independent: Did you have a completion bond? [These are often required by private investors who need a guarantee that the film will be finished.]

Maggenti: The only guarantee we had was my enthusiastic word that we would make the movie, sell it, and get it into theaters. Our last-minute $5,000 investor gave us the money because she saw how well everything was going. Completion bond...*ha!*

The Independent: How much did you spend on insurance? Who required it?

Maggenti: We used New York University insurance [for equipment and general liability] for the first half of the shoot, which I had because I maintained matriculation at NYU's graduate school.

Of course, one day a guy who was working for us got bonked on the head with a light—a Junior or a Baby or something. He had to go to the hospital, and our insurance didn't cover any of it! It also didn't cover our wardrobe or props or anything, so people slept in the prop and wardrobe vans overnight on our locations.

[During the second half of production,] Dolly was adamant about having adequate insurance, so she made a deal with some other production company to use their insurance. [The company said *Two Girls in Love* was being made for them, thereby enabling Maggenti and Hall to obtain production insurance and Workers' Compensationtwo other basic types of insurance needed for a shoot.]

The Independent: How much time was spent on preproduction?

Maggenti: Close to seven weeks. This is the single most important part of doing a low-budget film. We did the casting, script breakdown, scheduling, and location scouting in that time. Also, I rehearsed for four solid weeks with all actors.

The Independent: How much of the budget went to preproduction?

Maggenti: Not much. The office was Dolly Hall's loft. There were production people in there around the clock throughout the whole film. A lot of what they did was find crew who could come in and work for free.

The Independent: The crew all worked for free?

Maggenti: It's the only way this film could have been made. People worked on this because they wanted to. It was truly a labor of love. But most people on the film knew that Dolly would get them on a paying gig next, and that's exactly what she did.

The Independent: What size crew made *Two Girls in Love*?

Maggenti: This wasn't a fly-by-night, "Hey, let's make a movie, kids!" kind of shoot. Dolly Hall is a professional producer, so we had every department that you'd have on a larger-budget film, except for a second unit crew [associate producer Melissa Painter was the second unit D.P.].

The Independent: What were the key departments?

Maggenti: Casting was one person, Heidi Griffiths, whom I knew from college, and who lives in my neighborhood. She worked at the Public Theater, is a theater director herself, and at the time was working for a big Broadway casting house. Locations were found by two people; the

Continued on p. 77

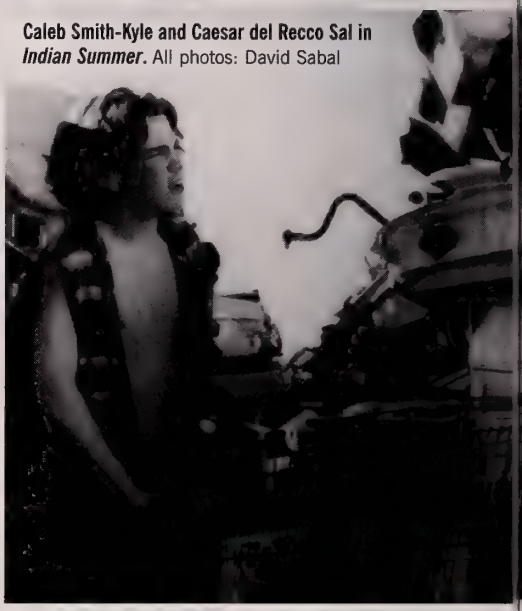
THE STATS:

Cost through principal photography:	$60,000
Cost through release prints:	Under $500,000
First cut:	118 min.
Released cut:	93 min.
Completion bond:	None
Insurance:	Borrowed from another production co.
Length of preproduction:	7 weeks
Preproduction rehearsal time:	4 weeks
Principal photography:	21 days (12-hour days)
Postproduction:	20 weeks (15 for picture, 5 for sound)
Preproduction staff:	10-15
Salaries:	0
Exterior locations:	10
Interior locations:	10
Company moves:	8
Locales:	Upstate NY; Westchester, NY; Newark, NJ
Cost of locations:	0
Sets shot with existing dressing & furniture:	0
Cost of art direction:	$2,400
Cost of sound equipment rental:	$2,800
Film stocks:	Brand new 7248 & 7245
Shooting ratios:	2:1 for first five days, 4:1 for remaining 16
Cost of camera:	0
Cost of additional camera equipment:	$600
Cost of grip & electrical equipment rental:	$5,800
Number of extras:	40-50, used for 1 day
Number of production vehicles:	4

Check it out!

The Distribution of *Indian Summer*

A filmmaker's step-by-step, dollar-by-dollar account



Caleb Smith-Kyle and Caesar del Recco Sal in *Indian Summer*. All photos: David Sabal

by Rob Sabal

During the 1995 International Film Financing Conference in San Francisco, Kay Armatage, a programmer for the Toronto International Film Festival, told the story of a persevering young filmmaker who called her continuously during the selection process to lobby for his film. While not recommending this particular course of action, Armatage used this story to point out that independent filmmakers need to get the attention of programmers in some way in order for their films to "rise above the muck."

I have never heard a phrase less sympathetic to independent filmmakers. But in the mercantile world of film distribution, it seems accurate.

This is a case history of the distribution of my film, *Indian Summer*. It is primarily personal and anecdotal, but it offers a realistic picture of what happens to a film that is not a "breakout" success, yet manages to get some distribution. Everyone knows the stories of the big and exceptional successes, such as *Slacker* or *El Mariachi*. Here is the more typical story.

Indian Summer is a feature-length narrative about a 16-year-old boy's escape from an oppressive life working in his father's auto salvage yard. His circumstances and outlook change after meeting an Apache and returning with him to the reservation. *Indian Summer* was filmed in Tucson and eastern Arizona, with the cast and crew from Tucson and the White Mountain Apache Reservation. It was shot on 16mm film and finished on D2 videotape for commercial distribution. The project was organized as a nonprofit production with the Arizona Center for the Media Arts serving as the fiscal agent. The film premiered in Tucson in the summer of 1992. That December a contract was

signed with Forefront Films, which agreed to represent *Indian Summer* as sales agent. One year later, an agreement was reached with Stardance Entertainment to release the film on home video, which it did under a different title, *Escape to White Mountain*, in June 1994.

Indian Summer was financed by a combination of grants, gifts, loans, and personal resources. The total cost of shooting the film was about $50,000. Postproduction cost another $15,000, bringing the total cash budget to $65,000.

While all of the professional crew and cast were paid, several of the principal crew members deferred sizable portions of their regular fees, bringing the total budget to $100,000. This was a frugal feature, and I anticipated paying off these loans and deferments quite easily and having a bit extra in an account at the Arizona Center for the Media Arts that I would use to launch my next project.



To begin the distribution process, I sent the film to a variety of festivals. Given the considerable expense and effort required to carry out a festival campaign, I implemented a strategy with a dual emphasis. Since *Indian Summer* represents contemporary Apache people and makes use of the Apache language, my first priority was to submit to festivals for native films, such as the Two Rivers Native Film Festival, the American Indian Film and Video Festival, and the Native American Film and Video Festival. I also targeted nationally known and respected mid-echelon festivals like Chicago International Film Festival, the Mill Valley Film Festival, and WorldFest Houston, where I thought the film had a chance, rather than Sundance, the New York Film Festival, or Toronto, which I entered with a clear understanding that I probably would not "rise above the muck."

One issue that arose at this stage was my decision to finish the film on D2 rather than 16mm. I had made this decision for two reasons: first, from what I was able to glean from seminars and magazines, the prohibitive expense of opening a film theatrically made it unlikely that *Indian Summer* would be picked up, blown up, and sent out. Since there seemed to be more outlets on television and video, I decided to finish in a format that would allow for easy and inexpensive duplication. Second, there are some clear technical advantages to D2. Its sound quality is far superior to 16mm and some image manipulation was more easily accomplished on tape than film.

What I did not foresee was that many festivals do not accept work on video, no matter what its original format. This meant that I had to be prepared to make a print if the screening committee saw the tape and invited *Indian Summer* to the festival.

The following is a list of all the film festivals to which *Indian Summer* was submitted:

American Indian Film & Video Competition
Athens International Film & Video Festival
Atlanta Film & Video Festival
Black Maria Film & Video Festival
Broadcast Education Association
Chicago International Film & Video Festival
Chicago International Children's Film Festival
CINE Golden Eagle Film & Video Competition
Dallas Video Festival
Mill Valley Film Festival & Videofest
Montreal World Film Festival
National Educational Film and Video Festival
Native American Film and Video Festival
New England Children's Film & Video Festival
New York Video Festival
Sundance Film Festival
Two Rivers Native Film and Video Festival
WorldFest Houston

The film was accepted in six festivals. It won four awards: a silver Hugo at the Chicago film festival; a Bronze Award at Worldfest Houston; the runner-up prize at the American Indian Film and Video Festival; and the top prize at the BEA faculty production competition. The tape also screened at Dallas and the Two Rivers Native Film and Video Festival.

These awards had real results. After winning at the American Indian Film and Video Competition, *Indian Summer* was mentioned in *Native People's* magazine. From this mention came a request from the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium to distribute the tape. I made several immediate sales to high schools and universities as well. I was also approached by a sales agent who was interested in taking the video to MIFED—although she was interested in getting me to pay close to $1,000 in advance to send her over with my tape. (I declined.)

Aside from the pride and confirmation that comes from winning an award, festivals have limited value in terms of providing substantive feedback on your film. But even modest festival awards translate directly into marketing capital. With a small film like *Indian Summer*, saying that it had some festival success was what convinced video store buyers to stock the tape. And each of those sales means money returned to the producer.

Like many independent filmmakers not living on the coasts, I relied on New York's Independent Feature Film Market to help my film break through the muck. Since I had been to the IFFM before with the short version of *Indian Summer*, I had a sense of what I could reasonably accomplish there and what I needed to prepare before my arrival.

Preparation began with an attempt to get my film reviewed by local journalists in conjunction with its premiere at the Arizona Center for the Media Arts. This proved impossible. Even though many journalists in town previewed the film, which helped boost

local box-office, only the local weekly reviewed the film. While very positive, it was essentially two paragraphs, leaving me very little to use for the promotional material I planned to take to the IFFM. (The one modest quote gets used repeatedly on the video box and in promotional materials.)

Prior to the IFFM, I put together the standard press kit and flyers and prepared a box of preview cassettes. Using the *FIVF Guide to Distributors* and a buyer's directory from the previous IFFM, I targeted a number of distributors whom I thought might be interested in handling the tape. Most of the companies who attend the IFFM are not distributors at all, but sales agents. They work off commission, generally taking a 20 to 25 percent cut of any sale they generate after their expenses are covered. These sales are made to domestic cable television, foreign broadcast and cable television, foreign and domestic home-video distributors, and possibly to a theatrical distributor. I sent letters asking if they might consider representing my tape. Four expressed some interest—ATA Trading, Films Around the World, Meridian, and Tapestry International. I sent each a preview tape and press kit, and set up appointments to meet with them during the IFFM.

Then I researched the reputations of these four companies, talking to staff members at AIVF and the Independent Feature Project, as well as asking the companies for filmmaker references, then calling them. I continued this research during the IFFM, asking filmmakers, agents, and distributors about the companies. This research was invaluable. It gave me some idea of the orientation of the company—whether they were more geared towards documentaries than narratives, for example, or focused on packages rather than individual films. I could also find out the strengths and weaknesses of each company—who was good at domestic cable or poor at home video, for instance—and how each was perceived in our rather small community.

None of the agencies that were interested provide either advances or guarantees (or would not for my film). As a result, it became critical to get a clear idea of how they'd market the film, what expenses that might generate, and what income they would expect to produce. This information was not always easy to ascertain, given the enormity of the variables. One company estimated that expenses the first year would be about $25,000, but could provide no overall marketing strategy, except to say they would put it in their catalog and "see what they could do."

After all the research, meetings, and examination of contracts, I put together a list of qualities that were appropriate for my film. First, I needed a company that had a reputation for distributing narrative features. Second, expenses had to be capped in the first year, when a great deal of expenses are usually generated. Third, the company had to present a strategy for selling my film, and not simply lump it in with every other film and sell it as a package. (Later I would discover the acceptability of packages.) Finally, they had to demonstrate through the negotiation process that I could trust them and feel they would be open to hearing my concerns, even if they did not necessarily act on them.

I did not sign a contract at IFFM. Even though I had arranged meetings, the atmosphere of the market made it difficult for company representatives to engage in detailed negotiations. Also, I did not want to act in haste. Even though it was tempting to enter into an agreement and get on with it, I thought it best to wait and see if any other agents would contact me after the market. I did in fact receive calls from several more agents and distributors. After another round of research and negotiation, I signed a contract with Forefront Films of Brooklyn, New York.

FOREFRONT WAS, AT THAT TIME, A NEWER COMPANY. MEGAN O'Neil and Harold Warren, the two principal agents, had worked at Films Around the World for several years and recently left to form their own company. It quickly became clear to me that we were a good match. Because the company was new, I suspected they would work hard to sell my film because they needed to generate revenue. They were clear about how they would go about selling it, choosing two approaches, one based

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Published by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film
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on the Native American theme and one using the idea of *Indian Summer* as a "family picture."

Even with all my positive feelings, negotiating the contract took a while. The essentials of the contract are this: I supply them with the D2 master, a duplication dub, and a PAL dub. They get 25 percent of whatever they sell and then deduct their expenses from the percentage returned to me. Forefront agreed to limit expenses to $12,500.

Here is a list of the places Forefront attempted to sell the film and all of the rejections:

21st Century (Australian home video)
Academy Home Video
Artvision (Poland)
Astral Distribution (TV Canada)
Bill Gilbert (ITV)
BM Entertainment (Korea video and TV)
BOP-TV (Africa)
Bravo
Capitol (Germany)
Channel 4 (UK)
Cinema Source (Scandinavian video and TV)
Disney Channel
Family Channel
Fox Lorber Home Video
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Live Home Video
Lucadia
Manifesto TV (European TV)
Monarch (Singapore, Malaysia)
New Culture Network (worked out deal but NCN folded)
NOS TV (Holland)
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Polygram TV (European TV)
RRS (German TV and video)
Saragusti (Argentina)
Shin Han (Korean video and TV)
Skouras Pictures
SPI (Turkey)
Telecine Films (Latin American home video)
Tilso-Argentine (home video)
TMI (South Korean home video)
Trans Pacific Films (as part of their series for Turner)
Triboro Home Video
Turner (domestic cable)
TV-1000 (Scandinavia)
Vcl/Carolco (Germany)
Warner Home Video (Norway)
Yeni Tual (Turkey)

Quite a long list. Still, it is heartening to me that they have worked so hard. It clearly is not work I could have done myself. What both Forefront and I are discovering is that packages are now something that cable companies want. Rarely do they purchase individual titles. There were several occasions when the director of acquisitions at a cable company liked *Indian Summer*, but because Forefront represented too few other films, the cable buyer passed. Now that Forefront has a larger roster, they believe they can make a profitable cable sale for *Indian Summer*.

The successes are much fewer and easier to report. *Indian Summer* has been licensed to:

Fox Lorber (Taiwan cable TV)
Orbit TV (Middle East satellite TV)
Wance Distribution (Brazil TV and video)
Stardance Entertainment (domestic home video)

Most of these are rather small sales that I will sum up in the conclusion. What I'd like to focus on now is the domestic home video sale.

The home video market is no longer wide open. Once dominated by small chains and individual stores, the videotape rental business has been consolidated into much larger chains that primarily rent well-known Hollywood movies. The practice of purchasing multiple copies of a well-known title has pushed smaller films off the shelf. These trends have hurt video distributors. Even large established companies, like Academy and Prism Home Video, have folded or filed for Chapter 11.

Indian Summer was picked up by Stardance Entertainment because it is a "family film." A slightly dysfunctional family, but a family nonetheless. Arnie Layken, the president of Stardance, sees family films as a niche market that is ignored by major production and distribution companies. Stardance liked the film and thought they could sell it.

Contract negotiations began between Forefront and Stardance. Here is where having an experienced agent and negotiator was essential. Forefront was able to successfully negotiate several important items. They got Stardance to cover the E&O insurance; pay for the production of the home video trailer; and put a $1,200 cap on reimbursable expenses for artwork and box construction. They also secured a quantity of promotional tapes; got access to the artwork Stardance produced for their sell sheets; set a base price for the tape; insured that *Indian Summer* would not be re-edited by Stardance; and, last but not least, secured a larger advance against royalties. Stardance paid a $7,500 advance to distribute the film for a three-year period. Forefront arranged to have this advance paid in stages during the initial transfer of materials. Finally, Forefront coordinated the shipping of tape to Stardance's duplication facility.

Of course, the title had to be changed. Buena Vista released a film called *Indian Summer* about a year after my film was at the IFFM. Since I had never registered the title and titles cannot be copyrighted, it was in the film's best interest simply to change the title and avoid any marketplace confusion. Stardance had the right to make the final decision. My guess is that by picking *Escape to White Mountain*, they were attempting to capitalize on the similarity to *Escape to Witch Mountain*, a popular Disney film. I had many talks with Arnie about the title and was con-

vinced he knew what had to be done to sell tapes. Still, I would have preferred something a bit less crass.

I was fortunate to have excellent production stills from the shoot, thanks to the hard work of my brother, David Sabal. Stardance took about 30 slides and came up with the box composite. It turns out that having good slides is essential to the marketing of your film.

Stardance put a great deal of effort into the sale of the tape. They took out advertising in the video trade magazines and sent their staff on extensive sales trips. Arnie tells me that Stardance invested about $60,000 on the marketing and sale of the tape.

Stardance sold about 3,600 copies last year, grossing almost $54,000. This is a respectable quantity for a low-budget independent title. Stardance recoups 80 percent of the sale of each tape, with the remaining 20 percent forwarded to the sales agent. Forefront then takes their 25 percent cut, deducts their expenses, and sends the remainder to the Arizona Center for the Media Arts. AZMAC takes a five percent administration fee and keeps the rest in an account for my future work.



Midnight Ethelbah as Grant in *Indian Summer*.

What has been so disappointing is that Stardance reports that the sale price to the video-store buyers averaged the exact amount of the minimum contract price. Even though the ads advertised the tapes at $59 to the video retailer, the unit price averaged $14.99—exactly the amount set as the minimum price that Stardance could sell tapes to the video retailers. Pretty depressing.

So let's follow the money. The film has generated a total of $61,000 in revenues: $54,000 in home video sales and $7,000 in television sales. From this $54,000 Stardance kept 80 percent, or $43,200. They deducted $1,200 in expenses for artwork and returned $9,500 (the $7,500 advance, plus a royalty check for $2,000) to Forefront.

This means that Forefront has collected $16,500 altogether from the sale and licensing of *Indian Summer*. From this amount, it has retained $10,178 in commissions and expenses (including $6,053 in costs related to the American Film Market and MIFED, screening cassettes, faxes, telephone, postage, and photocopying). Which means that Forefront has paid the Arizona Center for the Media Arts $6,322—less than 10 percent of the total revenues. After AZMAC takes its fee, there is about $6,000 left.

There are a few bright spots on the horizon. First is the possibility of sell-through. Stardance has recently completed an agreement with Bridgestone Multimedia, which will sell the tape to consumers through direct mail. Forefront and I agreed to drop the minimum price guarantee. While the margin on each tape will be very small, Stardance believes that Bridgestone can successfully sell 10,000 to 15,000 units, which might return about $15,000 to Forefront.

Some sort of domestic cable package could bring in another $10,000, and Forefront now has a feature package out to the several independent-oriented domestic cable channels: Edge TV, the Sundance Channel, and the Independent Film Channel.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM ALL OF THIS IS THAT THERE IS A difference between making a good film and making a marketable film. A marketable film is one that all the middlemen can make money on. Everyone between the filmmaker and audience is both a buyer and seller. Sales agents have to believe they can sell the product to distributors and television buyers. Home video distributors have to believe they can sell it to video store buyers. Video store buyers have to believe they can rent the tape to the consumer.

Several items make a film have a higher sales value. One is having a theatrical release. No matter how small, a theatrical release means that an initial advertising campaign will have generated some name recognition. The other essential element for a truly marketable film is having a "name" actor. This gives all the sellers something to market and all the buyers something of value. Very simply, name actors attract viewers.

What is interesting to me as a filmmaker is that agents and buyers can genuinely like your film while recognizing that there is no way for them to make a profit from it. Without some marketable elements, the chance of getting a film to an audience is very slim. I feel fortunate that *Indian Summer*—a film with no name actors, no theatrical release, and no genre-picture peg—has done as well as it has reaching an audience through the commercial distribution system.

Since completing Indian Summer, *Rob Sabal has written a new feature,* The Family of Helios, *and is completiong a short film,* MOLT!

The Independent talks to Robert Patton-Spruill about the making of *Squeeze*

A Crazy Environment

BY ANDREW O. THOMPSON

IF THERE'S AN AVENUE OF HOPE THAT LIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN *MENACE II SOCIETY* AND *KIDS*, THAT'S WHERE you'd find *Squeeze*. This fresh take on the overworked "New Jack" genre is set in Boston's Field's Corner, a poverty-stricken neighborhood blighted by the familiar double threat of crack cocaine and gang violence. Through its fluid camera moves and hyperreal production design, *Squeeze* heightens the strains of this taut environment.



In *Squeeze*, three friends have to weigh the merits of living straight with the temptation of street credibility.
All photos courtesy filmmaker.



(L-R) Ty Burton as Ty, Phuong Duong as Bao, and Eddie Cutanda as Hector. All three were members of a Boston gang prevention center; now they have SAG cards. Photo: Marcia Lerner

The film's teenage protagonists—African American Ty, Vietnamese Bao, and Puerto Rican Hector—bide their time pumping gas, scrounging for cash, and fleeing gang-bangers. When a youth center counselor spots the wayward trio, he convinces them to hook up with the center's paid "Red Shirt" brigade, which cleans up city parks. But when the possibility of quick loot and street credibility is thrust into their faces, the self-proclaimed "PG-13 Crew" take to drug pushing. Ty eventually succumbs to the pressures of his new vocation, experiencing post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Robert Patton-Spruill, *Squeeze*'s 26-year-old writer/director, is no stranger to controversial subject matter. While a graduate film student at Boston University, his documentary on a Mexican stripper, *Interior Monologue*, was turned off midway through its screening for the Student Academy Awards. His next film, *The Gaming Table*, took the racial and sexual tensions of Amiri Baraka's play *The Dutchman* and transposed them to the drug-fueled climate of a rave bar. Patton-Spruill's two 16mm shorts tied for first place in BU's Sumner Redstone Awards in 1993.

The actors portraying the protagonists of *Squeeze*—Ty Burton (Ty), Eddie Cutanda (Hector), and Phuong Duong (Bao)—hail from the Dorchester Youth Collaborative, a Boston-based gang-prevention center co-founded by youth counselor Emmett Folgert some 18 years ago. Cutanda and Duong are former gang members, while Burton was car jacking and selling drugs at age 12. Patton-Spruill came across the Dorchester Youth Collaborative in 1993 while casting for the WGBH children's series *The House*. He's been a volunteer there ever since and helped establish its actors' workshop, Extreme Close-Up, through which his leads have acquired SAG and AFTRA credentials.

Squeeze world-premiered this spring at the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival and was shown subsequently at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and the new Gen Art festival in New York. Hours before its LAIFF screening, Miramax acquired worldwide rights to the $400,000 film for a seven-figure sum. Slated to appear in theaters sometime in the next three to six months, it's to be the debut release of Miramax's newly formed Black film division, Flava Films. Patton-Spruill and cinematographer/editor Richard Moos (who is also president of their Cathartic Filmworks production company) also have a pay-or-play deal with Miramax for a second picture.

The Independent caught up with Patton-Spruill two weeks after the film's premiere.

The Independent: When did the Dorchester Youth Collaborative strike you as an ideal subject for a film?

Patton-Spruill: I was volunteering there for nine months before I thought about making a film.

The kids had come up with a bunch of skits, and we had a half-hour's worth of material. I'd gone to some of the local television stations to see if they wanted to do a Saturday morning kind of thing. We came really close with WGBH, but they weren't down, so I was depressed about that.

I'd also written a screenplay about kids in New York that was similar in overall theme to *Squeeze*, but it was about a girl [*Boy Without a Flag*, based on an Abraham Rodriguez book]. When that became a no-go picture, that was really depressing.

So, I'm sitting there with these kids I'd been teaching and it just came to me. The kids had come into some trouble, and I was there in the middle of the drama, so to speak, and it became clear that we had a real story there.

The Independent: How did you go about writing the script and choosing your leads?

Patton-Spruill: I was teaching 15 kids in the class, but I had three who were really strong—Ty, Eddie, and Phuong—so I knew I was going to write for them. They were the only ones who could handle the major parts—the real line-givers.

But I had a lot of really good actors in class, too. That's what gave me the ability to have good kids all the way through. They

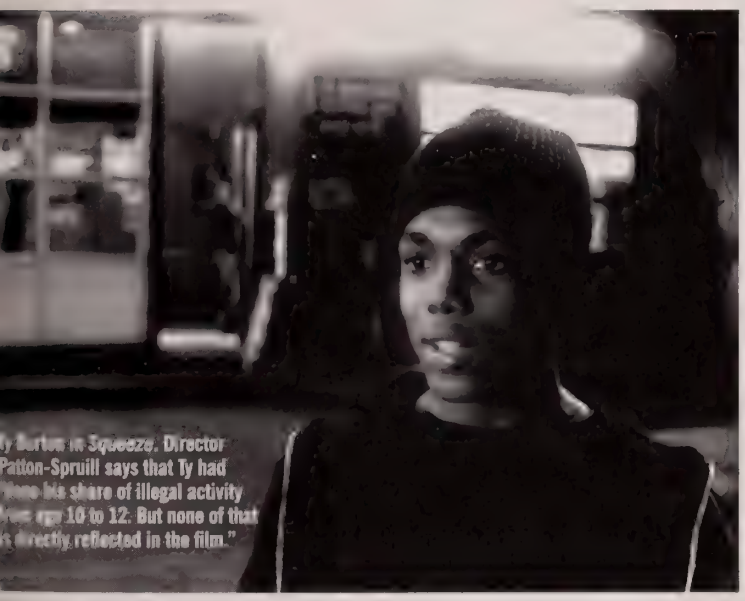
were all in my acting class and were really relaxed by the time we got camera time.

I sat down for two weeks and wrote out a first draft; the final film retains its basic overall structure. I used Truffaut's *400 Blows* as my guidepost in writing in that I really wanted the film to be an intimate portrait of the lives of these kids.

The Independent: The credits say that the script is based on the stories of Dorchester Youth Collaborative director Emmett Folgert. Is it just a bunch of his anecdotes strung together? Were there any that were too hardcore for your purposes?

Patton-Spruill: I worked very closely with Emmett, and he would tell me things about what had happened at the youth center prior to my being there. That's why we say it's based on scenarios of Emmett Folgert.

There was one story, a real Emmett Folgert story we touch on in the screenplay: Geoff Rhue [who plays the film's youth counselor] says there was this kid stabbed in the neck. Well, there really was a kid who was gunned down in front of Emmett, Ty, and everybody over a bike. That's a real graphic example. There's another event that happened here in Boston, a real shocker to the community: several kids got shot in a roller-skating rink.



That youth center looks really calm, cool, and collected in the film, but in real life there's many an opportunity when you're saying to some kid, "Please put the gun down," with police there. It happens all the time; it's just a crazy environment.

Oh, this is a funny thing: one of the kids, Victor Nuñez, who plays Eddie's little brother, was walking to set one morning. A car goes speeding by and they throw a gun out the window, and it falls right at his feet. A cop car goes speeding by, and there's Victor with a .38 Special at his feet while he's walking to my set. I find that very ironic.

The Independent: The acting seems very naturalistic. Were there scenes in this film that the kids had actually dealt with in their day-to-day lives?

Patton-Spruill: Not directly. They'd gone through similar things. Tyrone had done his share of illegal activity from age 10 to 12. But none of that is directly reflected in the film.

I wouldn't risk his life or anyone else's by portraying true events, because these kids still have to live in that neighborhood. We got real serious on that. We wanted to make sure our film was known as fiction, so brothers on the streets weren't like, "Yo, Tyrone, where's my five dollars?" We really wanted to avoid that.

So, yeah, Tyrone, Eddie, and Phuong all have their share of street war stories. But that's their personal lives, and I won't ever betray that trust. Tyrone was not able to go to Boston public schools because of those things at the time we were making this movie.

The Independent: How long was the rehearsal period with your three leads?

Patton-Spruill: The script was always being rewritten, but the time from the first draft to the first day of shooting was about a year and two months. But we really rehearsed it for a year. I would come out with a new draft maybe once a month during that period. It helped me as a director get to the heart of the matter.

The Independent: What was the most difficult aspect of coaching teen actors?

Patton-Spruill: Attention span. Kids are short attention span theater. That's the toughest part; getting them to rehearse maybe two pages in two hours is tough. They're off everywhere. And when you're trying to teach them how to perform naturalistically, they're off and you don't even realize that they are off on some other tangent. It's like, "Did I say improv?" Trying to keep them on the page, good lord.

The hardest thing about Tyrone was breaking him of the habit of licking his lips; he would do this LL Cool J thing before he'd say the lines. That was really annoying (laughs). And it was really hard to get Eddie not to speak too quickly. Phuong's [challenge] was to enunciate. He speaks English with an African-American dialect, even though he's Vietnamese. We spent months on Phuong's monologue; we must have done that every day for three months, four months, and still you couldn't understand what the boy is saying.

The Independent: Has there been any fallout around the film for the youth center?

Patton-Spruill: It's been a mixed bag already. As soon as I got back into town [from the festival screenings], there were a couple of articles in the gossip columns. Then one of the local papers published a picture of the three kids on the front page. The article basically said that they had made the film and sold it for seven figures.

Now these three kids are going down to the corner to get some Cheerios and milk, and everyone is trying to hit them for money. And these kids won't get a check for months. When they get one, it'll be a low-budget SAG check anyway. This is the most unfair thing to happen to anyone. They are just bewil-

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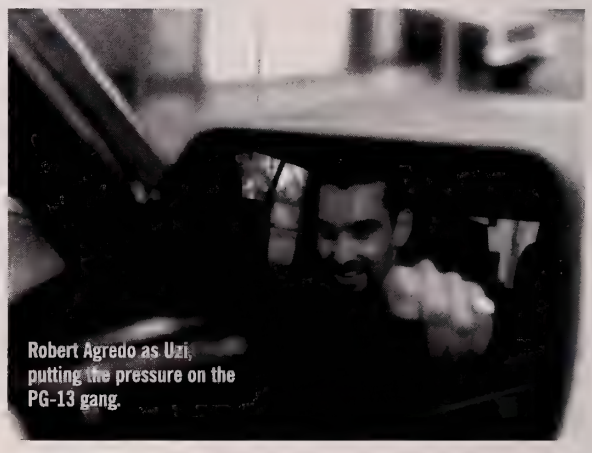
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dered by the whole thing.

But then, we just did a screening here in Boston and the kids got mobbed for autographs by all these little teenage girls who got into the Museum of Fine Arts. So on one level, they've got these big bulls-eyes on the back of their heads, and I'm afraid their homes are going to get invaded and they're going to get mugged. But at the same time, it's the teenage dream: every girl who ever looked down or away is now right there. Slowly but surely they're becoming the new Beatles of Dorchester.

Nothing's changed for them, except they don't have any money but everyone thinks they do. Also the number of times Tyrone gets beeped in the day. It's weird having William Morris agents call up and say, "How do we get Tyrone?" and Tyrone's like, "No, I'm just going to play ball. I'm not ready for all that; I've got to think about it." I'm so proud of him for not just jumping out there and saying "Put me on the next flight."



Robert Agredo as Uzi, putting the pressure on the PG-13 gang.

The Independent: Do you have any misgivings about going from being an independent to being based at a studio?

Patton-Spruill: Miramax is not like working at studio from what I know, because these dudes are cheap—and you can publish that. I swear I only got one baseball cap out of them. Helena Echegoyen, the head of Flava Films, put it to me very carefully: "At Miramax we like to see our money on the screen." So I don't feel like I've made a great leap, but I'm in good, safe, hard-working hands.

I guess when you get your runaway hit, like a *Pulp Fiction*, that's when they hook you up with the baseball caps and the jackets that say Flava Films (laughs). We'll see. It feels like a good fit, especially for this film. Besides, I really wanted to be with Miramax. That was my goal from the very beginning. To get it was the biggest confidence builder.

The Independent: Have you gotten any directing offers on the basis of *Squeeze*?

Patton-Spruill: No, but I saw this William Morris "open director list," which is all the films at studios that don't have directors attached, and you're supposed to say, "I want to read this script" or "Show my work to this person or that." That's how the process goes. There's also commentary, and for one movie that was exactly like *Clerks*, it said, "Interested in getting the director of *Squeeze*, Rob Spruill." Why the hell would someone who must have heard of *Squeeze* want me to direct a studio version of *Clerks*?

The Independent: Do you know what your next film with Miramax is going to be?

Patton-Spruill: I think I know: a piece called *Round Trip Fair.* That's what I want to fill that deal, but you never know. I'm a newbie to the world, I may doing *Bad Boys II* for Miramax (laughs).

The Independent: So what's *Round Trip Fair* about?

Patton-Spruill: It's sort of an *On Golden Pond* with Black people.

The Independent: That's quite a switch in tone from *Squeeze*, isn't it?

Patton-Spruill: I don't want to get pigeonholed immediately. And I certainly don't want to get pigeonholed as someone who has to do things with Black people, even though I find Black people most interesting. So I don't want to get into this thing where I have to make movies in Brooklyn.

The Independent: Do you have any other scripts on the burner?

Patton-Spruill: I have one called *Down and Out at 25*, which may turn out to be *Down and Out in Montreal*, depending on the financing. That's about a bunch of psycho, drug-dealing, bicycle-riding couriers who get into some hyper-violent situations and the dude lives off of white women. That's not quite the same pitch as the other one. It's something I want to do real low-budget, down and dirty.

There are a couple of other things I'm floating right now. Something I want to produce for my partner, Rich, that's about a bunch of gangsters who all end up getting into a hostage situations; they get slipped acid and trip. That's kind of interesting. I really just want to help Rich explore the limitations of the neo-realistic camera.

The Independent: How have your deals affected your production company, Cathartic Filmworks?

Patton-Spruill: We're in a tough boat. We paid back all our debts with this Miramax deal—basically got the film delivered, we paid SAG and the others—but Rich, Cathartic Filmworks, and I made zero, so we're just as broke as we were before. We're actually worse off, but we should be able to recover if we can get another movie going soon.

The Independent: Do you plan on remaining in Boston?

Patton-Spruill: Yes, I do. I'm going to try to rebuild the Boston scene big time. After this latest screening, I think there are some opportunities to get investments from the local community. We were able to raise $400,000 locally for *Squeeze*. I'd like to start raising money for the company, so it is financed to do more than one project and could also buy assets, like cameras, Avids, and other technical stuff. That way we're not in a situation where we are dependent on all these outside sources for money.

Andrew O. Thompson is assistant editor of American Cinematographer *and a frequent contributor to* The Independent.

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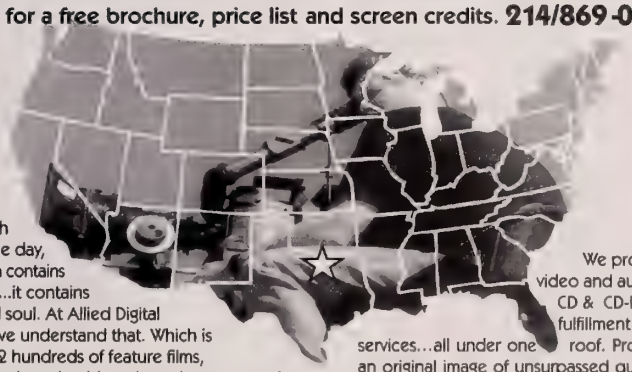
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Digital Video, From Soup to Nuts

Prototypes no more, the DV equipment lines have arrived.

BY CARL MROZEK

IS NOW THE TIME TO MAKE THE DIGITAL LEAP, or at least bunny hop? The video manufacturers are saying it is. At the National Association of Broadcasters' (NAB) convention this past spring, three major companies unveiled comprehensive equipment lines for no less than five new digital videotape formats.

While digital videotape has been around since the late eighties, it was primarily a post-production medium. Furthermore, the high cost of D1 and D2 hardware and tape relegated it to the high end of the production spectrum. Similarly, the recent advent of dockable digital Betacam camcorders made field acquisition of digital/component video plausible—but still beyond the budgets of most independents. The proliferation of nonlinear editing systems over the past two years—at ever lower prices—has enabled more producers to digitize and edit their analog video on hard drives, often with impressive results. Nevertheless, the high storage demands here too limited the numbers of independents able to realize the full benefits of digital video to those with substantial budgets.

But now these advantages are on the brink of becoming affordable and accessible. The catalyst? Upscale Japanese and European TV connoisseurs who are hooked on the 800+ horizontal lines of high definition TV (HDTV), but are unhappily relegated to taping this crisp imagery off the air with 250-line VHS recorders. The solution was obvious: "Let them record digitally!"

At first glance this seemed plausible enough, since sophisticated digital videotape-recorders (VTRs) have been around for a number of years, creating a body of technology to borrow and steal from. However, industry consensus was that a new digital videotape format and technology, geared to consumers, had to be created for off-air taping of HDTV. Production of VTRs, camcorders, and cassettes for this projected multi-billion dollar market could not begin until a digital format priced for mass appeal was developed.



Sony is launching its DVCAM line with hands-on demos in 50 cities beginning in October. Photos courtesy Sony.

The challenge was how to avoid a Babel of formats. Still smarting from the consumer format wars of the eighties—in which technologically superior Beta lost out to inferior but cheaper VHS—the major manufacturers were determined to avoid another battle for the low ground in the lucrative consumer marketplace.

To prevent an all-out digital format war, a global, industry-wide commission was established to develop a set of universal standards for the new digital video (DV) format. The goal was to ensure the compatibility and interchangeability of cassettes in the hardware of different manufacturers. The consortium successfully came together to develop a consumer format (though they went their separate ways when it came to professional-level equipment.) Key elements of the DV standard include the adoption of a 5/1 compression ratio; a 4:1:1 (4 luminance: 1 R-Y chrominance: 1 B-Y chrominance) sampling scheme; component recording on metal tape; and compatibility with globally predominant television formats, notably NTSC, PAL, and SECAM.

This year's first generation of totally digital camcorders and VTRs, which should be available through major deals by the end of this year, is largely an outgrowth of these efforts.

THOSE WHO HAVE HAD AN opportunity to road test the DV camcorders (such as Panasonic's AG EZ1U or Sony's DVX 1000) since their fall '95 debut already appreciate the fruits of this technological ferment: 500+ lines of horizontal resolution, component color suitable for multiple generations of editing without visible degradation, plus a durable tape that needs no compression for editing in a 4:1:1 digital environment. Video shot in the 1/4" DV format maintains its resolution, signal-to-noise ratio, and other parameters of quality even after successive conversions between digital and analog. "We've done many generations of digital-analog and analog-digital conversions of video shot on our AG EZ1U on the Media 100 [nonlinear editing system] without noticeable degradation of image quality," says Chris Ince of Digital Image in Rochester, New York, echoing the comments of many others who have experienced the DV format improvements.

While initially developed for sophisticated video "consumers," the DV format is just the tip of the digital iceberg. Professional iterations (like Sony's DVCAM and the noncompatible DVCPRO by Panasonic) offer considerable improvements in quality. DVCAM records video information on a cross-section of the tape path that's 50 percent larger than on DV. And it records at a higher tape speed. A minute's worth of DVCAM video is allocated more than twice the tape space. This, coupled with superior tape formulation, cam-

corders, VTRs, and other editing hardware and software, should yield a significantly superior product to that achievable on the DV format with one of the current DV camcorders. The availability in early 1997 of DV VTRs dockable to a wide range of digital and analog cameras should narrow this quality gulf.

Since DV, DVCAM, and DVCPRO all use digital and component recording, they should maintain nearly original quality for enough generations to satisfy most editing needs—if kept in a 4:1:1 environment at the same 1/5 compression ratio. This is problematic when working with most of today's nonlinear editing systems, which are geared to digitizing analog video. Virtually none can directly import 4:1:1 digitized video, but instead require a digital-analog-digital conversion, increasing the likelihood of introducing digital artifacts. This process is reversed each time the footage is output to digital tape, and repeated each time it is fed back into the hard drive for further editing. The risk and severity of digital artifacts increases with each successive conversion.

This undermines the underlying goals of industry leaders in developing the DV professional formats: same-compression editing to preserve video quality throughout the editing process. The major equipment manufacturers have responded differently to the challenge of editing in the same sampling scheme and compression ratio. JVC and Panasonic are initially taking a linear tape-to-tape approach, while Sony is moving in a hybrid linear/nonlinear direction, which combines the storage advantages of digital tape with the convenience of compact, random-access, graphically interfaced nonlinear editing.

SONY'S EDITING STRATEGY MIMICS AND improves on the hybrid tape/hard-drive approach used in the editing systems manufactured by FAST. This system controls VTRs for linear editing and digitizes analog video for nonlinear editing on the hard drive, alternating fluidly between the two media.

However, with Sony's editing stations there is no need to convert from digital to analog (D-A) or analog to digital (A-D) during editing, unless analog source video is introduced. With Sony's hybrid ES-3 and ES-7 computer-based edit stations designed for the professional DVCAM format, it is possible to alternate seamlessly between VTRs and a hard drive for source material—all at the same 1/5 compression and sampled at 4:1:1, virtually eliminating compression changes and D-A/A-D conversions, except with analog source videos. This radically reduces the chances of digital artifacting and maintains a consistently high quality of video throughout the editing process.

At least that is the design. Odds are that in the real world you'll be sourcing one or more analog tape formats and outputting to analog tape at least a few times during editing. Hence, you will be digitizing and perhaps redigitizing at least some footage more than a few times in the course of a particular project.

The hardware for Sony's new Betacam SX system does much the same and more as the ES-3 and ES-7 systems, but in a 4:2:2 MPEG sampling scheme, which Sony calls "studio profile." Hybrid VTRs (the DNW-A45, A50, and A100) have built-in hard drives which enable cuts-only editing with one VTR, AB roll editing with two VTRs, and full-screen GUI (graphics user interface) editing with one VTR and the DNE 50 laptop editor. With the DLE 110 desktop computer/editor, the DNW A100 becomes an on-line nonlinear editing station complete with computer graphics, transitions, and effects. It can also feed and record video at four times the normal speed. While initially intended for the news media, this feature can save independents time and money in the on-line suite. As with DVCAM, beta SX edit stations control and support most analog VTRs and formats.

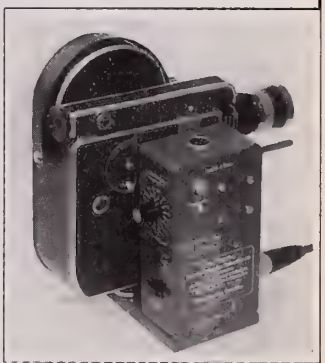
While pricing decisions are still in flux as of this writing, it appears that Sony intends to price its Betacam SX cameras, VTRs, and editors along the lines of its analog broadcast BVW equipment. While the improvements of the SX format may produce an end-product superior to that possible with most nonlinear editing systems boasting on-line capabilities and Beta SP quality, the cost of achieving the full range of digital effects, high speed downloading, and other features may push the price well beyond that of the broadcast editions of the Avid, Media 100, and FAST systems.

The prices of DVCAM hardware should be in the same ballpark as those of Sony's PVW analog series, ranging from approximately $6,500 for the DSR-1 dockable recorder or DSR-60 player, to $10,000 for the DSR-85 high-speed editing recorder, the Cadillac of the editing VTRs. The DSR-130 camcorder will retail for $20,000 or so. Sony is launching its DVCAM with hands-on demonstrations in

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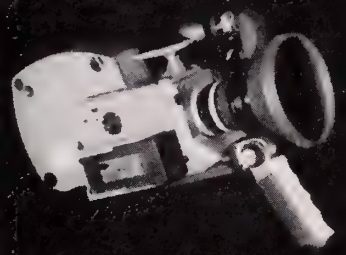
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It appears Sony will be pricing its edit stations along lines similar to other nonlinear editing systems—which they resemble more closely than the linear-editing hardware they replace. They will retail from $8,000 for a no-frills ES-3 to over $60,000 for a full-blown ES-7. Cost aside, they should achieve what no other nonlinear or hybrid system can today: fully digital editing at the same compression plus unlimited, economical storage of digital video on tape—without the problems of A-D/D-A conversion, except when analog videotape is added.

By contrast, Panasonic's approach to editing its professional DVCPRO format is to do it the old-fashioned linear way. You'll need three studio VTRs for AB roll editing, which could cost you $40,000 to $50,000, plus an edit controller.

Another option is a one-piece field-editing package with dual LCD monitors for about half the cost. Panasonic's DVCPRO VTRs interface with most analog and many digital formats, via the 4:2:2 serial digital interface. However, an adaptor is recommended for playing the much smaller DV cassettes in DVCPRO decks.

Even though it is a 1/4" videotape, DVCPRO is being marketed as a broadcast format. Footage can be uplinked via the field-edit package or a laptop player and a telephone line. According to Panasonic, DVCPRO tape and equipment is designed to withstand the rigors of an electronic news gathering environment. DVCPRO is a rugged metal particle tape designed with high-speed playing, recording, and uplinking in mind. It is also tolerant of weather extremes and multiple passes with minimal dropouts.

For acquisition, you cannot take a half step into the DVCPRO format by renting or buying a VTR to dock to your current camera; you must get the whole package. Panasonic offers a choice of two single-piece pro camcorders, one geared for ENG use (with three 1/2" FIT chips) and the other (with 2/3" FIT chips) for broadcast and nonbroadcast commercial applications. The latter comes with a switchable 4x3/16x9 aspect-ratio formatting for producers seeking distribution in the emerging advanced TV marketplace. Both units are tough yet light at 11 and 13 pounds respectively, without lens. Both record 63-minute DVCPRO field tapes (the same as Sony's Beta SX). While the cassette size is identical to Sony's DVCAM, the faster recording speed of DVCPRO VTRs accounts for the difference in maximum field-recording lengths (63 vs. 184 minutes). Panasonic insists that the faster record speed of DVCPRO and broader track pitch for recording video militate for a superior broadcast format in a compact 1/4" cassette.

Nevertheless, the early consensus indicates that JVC's 1/2" digital S tape format offers the biggest bang for the buck. Digital S, like digital Beta, Beta SX, D1 and D2, uses 4:2:2 sampling. It also has low compression—only 1/3 compared to digital Beta's roughly 1/2 compression ratio. Like digital Beta, it is one of several 1/2" digital formats and records video across a broader tape path (20 micron track pitch) than either DVCAM (15 microns) or DVCPRO(18 microns).

JVC is bullish about these and other distinctions making digital S a superior format for the money and a logical pathway to digital production. This is especially true for those now shooting and editing in S-VHS, due to digital S's compatibility with S video and its dockability to most JVC analog cameras. In fact, JVC is releasing its editing decks this summer, ahead of its field decks, so the vast majority of us working in analog formats can test and experience the quality gains made possible by editing from an analog component or S-video format to digital S. "Many producers now acquiring in S-VHS and other formats with our KY 27 series cameras would be very happy if they could simply preserve their original quality throughout the editing process. Digital S finally lets them do so," says JVC regional sales manager Bill Birdsoll.


Sony's Betacam SX family.

JVC is not content with possibly having the best of the new professional DV formats. They also want market share and seem intent on getting it through attractive, if not aggressive, pricing. By opting for the BR D85 recorder/editor with pre-read, it is possible to have 4:2:2 digital AB roll editing for less

than the cost of a single D1 player.

The major downside to the digital S format at this time is that its editing system is strictly linear. Three decks are available: a feeder/player and two editing recorders, including the BR-D85 with pre-read. This feature makes AB roll editing possible by using the edit deck as a B-source deck for transitions as well serving as a record deck. Pre-read is typically available only with pricey broadcast VTRs and should especially be a boon to producers heavily invested in linear editing hardware, but interested in moving into on-line 4:2:2 digital postproduction without spending a fortune. For an additional $9,000 or so, you can dock a digital S VTR to your analog camera and begin shooting in a 4:2:2 digital broadcast format.

As with the other digital formats, if you are too accustomed to nonlinear editing to backtrack to linear, the inability to import the excellent 4:2:2 footage onto your Avid, Media 100, or other nonlinear system without first detouring through the analog world is an annoyance you'll have to live with—at least until nonlinear manufacturers come up with a technical fix. Producers who are happy in their current nonlinear environments are likely to think twice before rushing to trade in all their analog VTRs and cameras.

Until this happens, Sony appears to have the most comprehensive digital acquisition/editing solution for the moment. Its hybrid hard drive/tape-tape editing systems for both its DVCAM and Betacam SX formats permit digital editing of source material from analog or digital videotape or from another hard drive in either a linear or nonlinear digital environment. And it's all in the same sampling scheme and at the same compression, with virtually no digital artifacts. Until disc-based storage becomes far more efficient and cost-effective, blending digital video with digitized analog video in a standardized environment (i.e. same sampling scheme, same compression) may be the best compromise for some time to come. Many variations on this strategy are possible and will be forthcoming in the next few years. In the meantime, producers should try to enjoy the fruits of the digital revolution and feel free to experiment with their own pathways en route to digital perfection!

Carl Mrozek produces environmental and wildlife documentaries and is in quest of a compact, cost-effective digital pathway to broadcast-quality video production.

Watch for an in-depth report on Sony's consumer-level digital video cameras in the next issue of *The Independent*.

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BY MITCH ALBERT



bye-bye Babushka takes a look at the changing lives of women in the former Soviet Union. Courtesy filmmaker

The Russians are coming, or, rather, they've arrived. *Tina and Lance* (80 min., Beta) has Tina, a young woman from New York's Russia-on-the-Atlantic, Brighton Beach, in love with an American man with a "mysterious occupation." The evasive Lance won't tell Tina what he does to earn his supper, but naturally everyone in Tina's circle pitches in with a theory. A "romantic comedy" from Bronx natives John and Michael Brophy, the film stars actors with extensive credits in Russian and American films and plays. With this project completed and now on the road to the world's festivals (and it's already appeared at the Albany International Film Festival), the brothers began shooting their second feature this summer, *Victoria Pool. Tina and Lance*, Brothers Productions, 424 East 14th St., Suite #4E, New York, NY 10009; (212) 529-8941.

Then there's Tony Pemberton's ***Youngstown*** (35mm, CinemaScope), in which Pici, a 24-year-old woman living in New York, filters her memories of life in a rural Russian coal mining town through a whirl of imagination, humor, and desire to impress an intrigued friend. Fact and fiction become so blurred in Pici's mind that she is able to carve out a liberated space for herself, which an upbringing amidst tyrannical sociopolitical, sexual, and familial forces severely inhibited. Told through Pici, the narrative itself is deliberately contrary, thus freeing viewers from the need to perceive events as having only one literal or certain meaning. Shot in Russia and the US, the film is in both languages with subtitles as necessary. *Youngstown*, Tony Pemberton, 666 Fifth Ave., Suite #572, New York, NY 10103; Box 353 Post International (Russia); tel: (7095) 254-2873; fax: 200-3858; pemberton@glas.apc. org.

bye-bye Babushka (90 min., 16mm) goes for just the facts, ma'am, to record freewheeling, freefalling, ever-changing definitions of today's Russia, with exclusive focus on women of the former Soviet Union. Among them villagers, Muscovites, collective farm workers, party members, and dissidents, the women discuss Then and Now. Blending documentary footage with "unabashed theatrical recreations of Soviet rituals relevant to coming of age in the USSR," director Rebecca Feig achieves a remarkable portraiture that travels along the timeline from Lenin to leniency. The film is scheduled to wrap this September. *bye-bye Babushka,* Persistence of Vision, 68 West 69th St., #B, New York, NY 10023; tel/fax: (212) 799-8438, 501-0553; tel(Moscow): (7095) 280-9909.

Detroit has fast become a sort of Brighton Beach for many Arab immigrants. ***Tales From Arab Detroit*** (45 min., video), "an intergenerational dialogue about cultural identities," hails from producers Joan Mandell and Sally Howell in association with an Arab community center in Dearborn, Michigan. The video, which "hip-hops from ancient oral traditions to Yemeni-American rap," recently won top prize at the American Anthropological Association's Society for Visual Anthropology. *Tales From Arab Detroit*, Olive Branch Productions, 1511 Sawtelle Blvd., Suite #265, Los Angeles, CA 90025; tel/fax: (310) 444-9715.

Cinephiles, take heart: here's the long-awaited sequel to the 1980 "cult classic" (and video-store rental champ) *I Spit On Your Grave*, enchantingly titled ***I Spit On Your Grave 2*** (est. 90 min., 35mm), from the creator of the original, Meir Zarchi. Either an edgy feminist bludgeon or a grossly misogynist atrocity, the original rape-revenge exploitation flick generated more than its fair share of controversy in its day. Still banned in the UK, the film (or, more accurately, the video) has become a suburban-teen staple in North America. The sequel will commence shooting in North Carolina this September. *I Spit On Your Grave 2*, Tipperary Pictures, 270 North Cañon Drive, Suite #1139, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; (213) 882-6550; fax: 882-6954; Kforland@aol.com.

Kinda sorta like a *Two-Lane Blacktop* in "color-drenched sensuality," Thomas Pallotta's ***The High Road*** (80 min., 16mm) tells the madcap saga of four young Texans and their journey around the Lone Bullet State in their 1963 New Yorker. Newly flush with disposable income, Mike, Natalie, Eduardo, and Phil run from the law, sample

roadhouses, frolic by waterfalls, and engage in other pasttimes of carefree youth. Likewise the encounters with ethnic ambiguity, bourbon-soaked violence, drug dealers, cowboys, infidelity, and shotgun marriages, which all serve to hone the tension that builds up since their wheels first hit the road. Pallotta, who hails from Austin, held things together for less than $50,000. The film screened at New York's Lincoln Center in June as an installment of the *Independents Night!* series. *The High Road*, PBLK Communications, Inc., Box 1643, Austin, TX 78767; (512) 495-9673; fax: 495-9824.

From filmmakers Jonathan M. Flicker and Dennis Gossett, Jr. comes a Greek tragedy. ***Followers*** (85 min., 16mm) unfolds in the freshman year of a close-knit trio of young men. When they decide to pledge a fraternity, their ties become more binding in the face of the racist frat president who "targets their friendship for destruction." The film, shot in New York and New Jersey last March, is based on an actual racial hazing. Eddie Robinson, the lead in John Sayles' recent *Lone Star*, is featured. *Followers*, SLG Communications, 924 Garden St., Suite #2R, Hoboken, NJ 07030; (212) 592-2062.

The 'luck of the Irish' is, as with everything, relative. Boston-based producer Cob Carlson has completed a documentary on his grandmother, a 96-year-old woman who arrived alone in the US when she was 17. ***An Irish (American) Story*** (30 min., 16mm) explores Mary Crehan Dillon's efforts to fashion a new life. Along the way, the film records her views on work, money, family, religion, and culture in the voice of a generation that's very nearly disappeared. *An Irish (American) Story*, Cob Carlson, Box 391184, Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 489-4708.

Last year, for a good few months, Temple University film students Keith Fulton and Lou Pepe were the 13th and 14th monkeys on the set of Terry Gilliam's 1995 shoot for *12 Monkeys*. The result is their own film, ***The Hamster Factor and Other Tales of Twelve Monkeys*** (90 min., video). A look through the lens of two young independents at the creative exigence of one of the most independent of filmmakers (though the film was released by Universal), the documentary was commissioned by Gilliam as a way of giving a break to local film students. Fulton and Pepe submitted a reel of their work (along with candidates from several other area schools) and won the director's nod. Universal Pictures will add the doc to its special-edition laserdisc issue of *12 Monkeys*. *The Hamster Factor and Other Tales of Twelve Monkeys*, Low Key Productions, 630 North Second St., Philadelphia, PA 19123; (215) 627-6821.

Moving from plague fictions to plague totems: Carolee Schneeman's multimedia installation, ***Known/Unknown: Plague Column***, takes its inspiration from an Austrian cult object, circa 1750, built by monks to protect villages against ravaging diseases. Consisting of "18 photographic columns of permutated colored prints and columns of related text and sculptural objects, and a circle of video monitors presenting volatile images," the work probes issues of health and illness, the objective science of cellular and microscopic reactions and the realm of personal experience. A retrospective of Schneeman's work will be held at the New Museum in New York in November.

Medea Blitz: Euripides' revenge drama is



Matthew Ogens' documentary *A Ray of Hope* was shot on many of the same locations as *Dead Man Walking* and examines many of the same issues surrounding death row . Courtesy filmmaker

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The Evergreen State College, a public liberal arts college, is seeking to fill a staff position responsible for the administrative planning of performing & media arts production & supervision of staff in supporting the delivery of the performing & media arts curricula. Position fills the role of producer or delegates that responsibility as well as supervises & supports all technical & administrative aspects of productions.

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IN & OUT



Terry Gilliam in *The Hamster Factor and Other Tales of Twelve Monkeys.* Courtesy filmmaker

reconfigured for the (post)-modern age and paired with verse from poet Jack Stokes' award-winning *Mama*, in Chicagoan Dennis Neal Vaughn's new feature, ***Mama Medea*** (90 min., 16mm). The elements of Greek drama, free verse, Derek Jarman, and film noir come together in this tale of The Dreamer, a pregnant woman who's in therapy. Her husband is about to leave her for the daughter of his new boss, at a job The Dreamer betrayed her own father to help her husband obtain. The psychiatrist attempts to piece together the disparate aspects of The Dreamer's life until a shocking journey into the shattered woman's psyche reveals "the true nature of The Dreamer." *Mama Medea*, Axis Mundi, 3430 North Lake Shore Dr., Ste #19N, Chicago, IL 60657; (312)525-4559; fax: 327-8669.

Speaking of revenge, ***A Ray of Hope*** (26:30 min., Beta-SP) turns an exploratory lens to Death Row. Tracing a chain of causality from the streets, schools, and housing projects of the new "murder capital of the US," New Orleans, to the Angola State Penitentiary, producer Matthew Ogens' documentary tries to nail down "the cycles that perpetuate crime." The production, which used many of the same locations as *Dead Man Walking*, polls the law, the gangs, the criminologists, and the communities to glean exactly where and how the nexus of systems has broken down. *A Ray of Hope*, Matthew Ogens, 924 Valmont St., Suite #201, New Orleans, LA 70115; (504) 891-0163; fax: 891-6898.

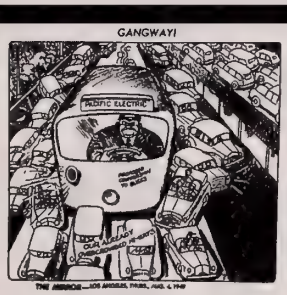
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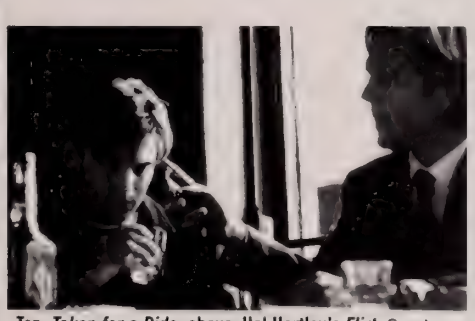
If you're an AIVF member in the Pacific Northwest with a production you want to show off, this is your chance to experience the gentle glow of media exposure. *The Independent* is covering your turf in a regional spotlight this November and is looking for in-progress and completed projects to profile through our "In & Out of Production" column. If you want the attention, you've got to be swift: the deadline is August 15. Send synopsis, contact info, photos, etc. to: In & Out—Pacific NW, *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., NY., NY 10013.

IN TODAY'S INDEPENDENT FILM DISTRIBUTION MARKET, THERE'S NO TIME FOR SLOW BUILDS. If exhibitors don't see audiences for independent films in the first two weeks, they figure they're not coming at all. Likewise, if an independent production finds a home on television, the station looks to audience feedback to help determine if they'll keep the niche for future productions. With that in mind, this section offers shameless plugs for soon-to-be-seen films and videos in hopes that you'll support them. Who knows; maybe they'll do the same for you someday.

fresh produce

Look at the big automobiles and the highways built for them and you're looking at a car culture, say Jim Klein and Martha Olson, the makers of *Taken for a Ride* (55 min., video). They examine the assassination of U.S. mass transit, showing how General Motors created and spearheaded the nation's enthusiasm for the automobile and masterminded the destruction of the once-prevalent public streetcar system. Once the company's president ascended to Secretary of Defense in 1953, GM pushed for the creation of the $50 billion Interstate Highway System, a boon for traveling salesmen and vacationing families but hell on the many communities that were shredded in the bargain. The film arcs from the recent past into the pollution- and urban disintegration-rife present, when proposals for computer-controlled highways (and, ironically enough, streetcars) are touted as moneysavers. This ITVS coproduction debuts August 6 on POV.

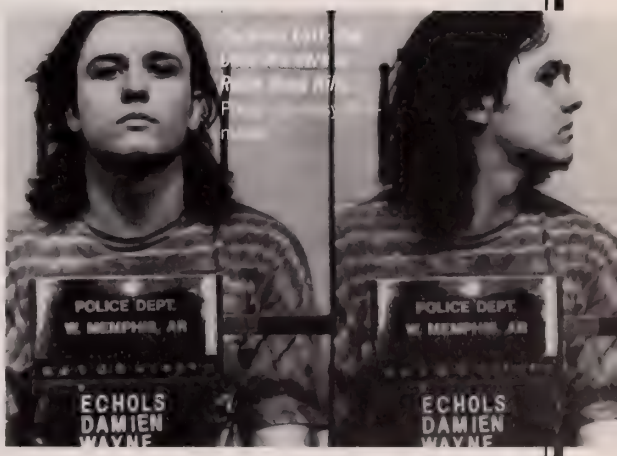




Top: *Taken for a Ride*; above, Hal Hartley's *Flirt*. Courtesy Mirror Collection/LA Public Library; courtesy filmmaker.

August also brings us *flirt* (85 min., 35mm), Hal Hartley's newest contribution to the 'Deadpan' genre he's helped perfect. The film, which won accolades at the Toronto and Sun-dance fests, "spans three continents, three languages, three races, two sexual orientations, and an infinitely comic variety of misunderstandings." In parallel tales of ultimatums and declarations of love, two men (in New York and Berlin) and a woman (in Tokyo) are torn between commitments and loose ends. Long a film without a distributor, *flirt* was finally picked up by Cinepix Film Properties.

Uber-documentarian Ken Burns takes a turn in the producer's chair when he presents *The West*, a documentary by Stephen Ives "that reveals the stories, struggle, and splendor of the American West." The 12-1/2 hour series includes the tales of the transformation of a Mexican-American village called Los Angeles, the Mormons who struggled to build a society in Utah, and the African Americans who left the South for the "promised land" of the West. It also includes the history of those who were here first: "the vastly different tribes of Native Americans who regarded the West as the center of the universe." *The West* premieres on PBS on Sept. 15.



Baseball and *Civil War* documentarian Ken Burns is the producer of *The West*, a new PBS series. Photo courtesy filmmaker.



What is going on in Arkansas, asks *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (130 min., 16mm), another investigation by *Brother's Keeper* team Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky into hidden worlds rarely explored. In 1993, three young boys were found savagely murdered in a rural Arkansas community, one of them castrated. Three teenaged boys were charged with the slayings, which some believed were

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a Satanic ritual. The confession, from a slight boy with an IQ of 72, bore all the earmarks of police coercion. Much was made of the ostensible ringleader's fondness for black clothing, and the teens' lifestyles became as much the focus of the prosecution as the killings themselves. The film immerses itself in the lives of all concerned and documents the Gothic tensions underlying this uniquely American setting. A veteran of major festivals worldwide, the film will be self-distributed by the filmmakers' production company Creative Thinking with support from the Gotham Entertainment Group, and is scheduled to open in New York Sept. 20 and nationwide the next week.

Lisa Kruger's *Manny & Lo* (90 min., 35mm) is a good bet for late July. A Sundance graduate, this off-kilter comedy sets up motherless sisters aged 11 and 16 who set out on the road together after liberating themselves from their separate foster homes. Since Lo, the teen of the duo, is pregnant, the sisters take as a hostage a maternity store clerk "who presents herself as the world's ultimate authority on motherhood." Produced by *Monkey*-spanker Dean Silvers and Marlen Hecht; scored by wacky jazzbo John Lurie. A Sony Pictures Classics Release.

The documentary *Predictions of Fire* (95 min., 16mm) takes in the miasmic history of the Balkans and this century's relationship between art and politics. Former *New York Times* and *Rolling Stone* journalist Michael Benson helmed this project, which made the rounds at Sundance, Berlin, Sydney (and, uh, Ljubljana) to great acclaim. It tracks the Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK), an arts collective straight outta Slovenia. Formed when a group of painters called "Irwin" and a theater troupe known as "Red Pilot" joined the sensational, neo-Sex-Pistols rock group "Laibach," the collective is one of the world's largest and most outrageous. NSK has established a state-within-a-state, complete with its own passports and embassies in Russia, Italy, and Japan. The film also illuminates the region's long history of conflict, dislocation, and authoritarianism. A TVS Arts Program (Slovenia)/ Kinetikon Pictures (USA) Production, it opens Oct. 2 at New York's Film Forum.

—MITCH ALBERT

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IS THE 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., SEPT. 1 FOR NOV. ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED.

Domestic

ACADEMY AWARDS (DOCUMENTARY/SHORT AWARDS), June, CA. To be eligible for Oscar consideration: DOCS: film must have been publicly exhibited (w/in 2 yrs of film's completion date) for paid admission in commercial motion picture theater in either Los Angeles County or the Borough of Manhattan for a run of at least 7 consecutive days btw Nov 1 of preceding yr & Oct 31 of current yr. Doc Awards divided into 2 cats: (a) doc features (films more than 40 mins) & (b) doc short subjects (films 40 mins or less, incl credits). Doc awards shall be limited to film's producer(s) &/or director(s), not more than 2. Films submitted for Doc Feature Award consideration may also qualify for Academy Awrds in other cats if they meet requirements of special rules governing those other cats, w/exception of Best Foreign Language Film Award. SHORTS: given for best achievement in each of 2 classifications: animated films & live action films; doc short subjects not accepted in either cat. Entries may not be more than 40 mins incl credits. Entries must fulfill (w/in 2 yrs of film's completion date) 1 of following criteria betw Dec 1 of preceding yr & Nov 30 of current yr: a) film must have been publicly exhibited for paid admission in a commercial motion picture in Los Angeles County for run of at least 3 consecutive days (no fewer than 2 screenings/day); student films cannot qualify in this manner; or b) film must have participated in "recognized" competitive film fest & must have won best in cat award (this fest list may be obtained from Academy). A student film may qualify only under (b) above or by winning Gold Medal Award in Academy's Annual Student Academy Awards competition (exclulding doc cat), provided it meets length requirement. Recipient of statuette will be individual most directly responsible for concept & creative execution of film. In event that more than 1 individual has been directly & importantly involved in creative decisions, 2nd statuette may be awarded (no more than 2 awards per winning film). Only 1 entry in each classification will be accepted from each producer or each identical producing team. Both docs/shorts: Eligible films submitted must be 16mm, 35mm, or 70mm; special technical presentation (e.g. IMAX, Omnimax, Showscan) are given consideration. Significant dialogue or narration must be in English or film must have English subtitles. Prints must be shipped prepaid to Academy; those not chosen will be returned at Academy expense. Submitted films ineligible for consideration in any subsequent awards year. Academy retains for archives every print chosen as nomination for final balloting in each cat. Films that receive 1st public exhibition on broadcast or cable TV ineligible for Academy Awards. TV exhibition does not disqualify film, provided such exhibition occurs after its Los Angeles theatrical release, or after its fest exhibition in those cats which permit such exhibition as means of qualifying. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Oct 31 (docs); Nov 30 (shorts). Contact: Docs/Short Films Office, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211-1972; (310) 247-3000; fax: (310) 247-2600.

CHARLESTON INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL / WORLDFEST CHARLESTON. Founded in 1993, this is sister fest to WorldFest-Houston. It incls about 25 premieres of new American ind & foreign films & expanded juried competition in numerous cats, incl features, shorts, docs, interactive media, student films, exp, TV production, TV commercials, music videos, screenplays & the MUSC medical film & video awards. Awards: Remi Gold Grand Award for Best Entry in each of major cats; Gold Special Jury Award, & Gold, Silver, Bronze & Finalist Awards for Best Entry in Sub-cat. Student entries compete for $2,500 cash award for best entry & $500 award in each sub-cat. Screenplay entries compete for Gold, Silver, Bronze & Finalist awards, incl a $2,500 cash option for winner & $100,000 writers fee on production. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $50-$200. Deadline: Late Sept. Contact: Greg Johnson, Charleston Int'l Film & Video Festival/WorldFest Charleston, Box 838, Charleston, SC 29401-0838; (713) 765-9955; fax: (713) 965-9960.

CIN(E)-POETRY, Nov., CA. Formerly Poetry-Film/Video Fest (estab in 1975), fest showcases "latest cutting-edge poetry-films & videos" from U.S. & abroad. Videopoem or film "combines literature (usually poetry), music and dynamic visual imagery to carry a powerful poetic statement, usually under 10 min. in length." No filmed poetry readings accepted. $800 in cash & prizes presented, as well as nationwide tour for award-winning works. Deadline: Oct 1. Contact: George Aguilar, curator, Poetry Film Workshop, Fort Mason Center, Bldg. D, San Francisco, CA 94123; fax: (415) 776-3206.

CINEQUEST: THE ANNUAL SAN JOSE FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 30-Feb. 5, CA. Maverick Filmmaking is annual theme of Cinequest, founded in 1990, which showcases "an eclectic mix of ind films & filmmakers demonstrating the qualities of the maverick: individuality, innovation, intelligence." Fest offers "personal & intimate environment" for filmmakers, film buyers & film fans. Special sections incl Kids' Films, Latino Films, Midnight Films, & the fest's own Film Feasts (thematic events of film, food, & entertainment). Ind feature & short films of artistic, social or stylistic merit eligible. Significant Bay Area coverage; nat'l & int'l press is growing. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Oct. 11. Contact: Mike Rabehl, programming, Cinequest, Box 720040, San Jose, CA 95172-0040; (408) 995-6305; fax: (408) 277-3862; sjfest@aol.com.



DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL, Jan. 9-12, TX. 10th anniversary year. Presented by Video Association of Dallas & Dallas Museum of Art, showcase of new works by ind artists. Features general fest programming ("state of medium—as art, as entertainment, as document, as archive & as commerce"). No cash awards; rental fees paid to participants. Program features Texas Show, juried program of new works prod by Texas artists, interActive Zone, for interactive works & Kidvid, for works on media literacy or by children & teens. Entries must be prod or post-prod on video or shot on film & transferred to video; works previously entered ineligible. Annual audiences est at 5,000-7,000, for program of 150-200 works. Extensive local coverage. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", HDTV, multimedia, installations. Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Sept. 20. Contact: Bart Weiss, fest director, Dallas Video Fest, 1405 Woodlawn Ave., Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 948-7300; fax: (214) 943-1776; bart@onramp.net; http://www.videofest.org.

FORT LAUDERDALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AND MARKET, Oct. 30-Nov. 17, FL. 11th annual 10-day competitive fest (beginning w/ 9-day mini fest in Boca Raton) showcasing independently produced films, dedicated to "emphasizing film as a means of cultural awareness as well as for entertainment." Comp cats incl. professional full-length features, docs, & short subjects (up to 10 mins). Of 60-75 features in fest, approx 15 invited into competition. All docs & shorts eligible for awards in respective cats. Feature films considered for Director, Actor, Actress, Golden Palm Award & Audience Award. Special Jury prizes awarded. Since 1989, fest has honored outstanding student films in Nat'l Student Competition in cats of student narrative (25-50 mins), short narrative (under 25 min), doc, animation & music video; all winners receive cash prizes, plaque & product grant from Eastman Kodak. Fest also has Art on Film doc series. Competition features receive own page in fest program, inserted into 250,000 Ft. Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* Friday editions. Program also incl galas & parties, award ceremonies, tributes (incl Lifetime Achievement Awards) & seminars. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 70mm. Entry fee: $40 features; $30 shorts; $25 student. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Bonnie Adams, education coordinator, Fort Lauderdale Int'l Film Festival, 2633 East Sunrise Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304, (954) 563-0500, fax: (954) 564-1206, Brofilm@aol.com; http://www.vcn.net/filmfest.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MEDIA FESTIVAL, Dec., MD. Students encouraged to create their own stories & to produce own visuals & own audio; preferred that script, music, sound effects, photography, artwork, video footage, computer graphics, animation, etc. all be student work. Producers compete only against students of approx same age. Grade classifications: K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, college/university. Entry cats: Comedy, Drama, News, Documentary, Instructional, Promotional, Music Videos, PSA's, Sports. Entries may be produced by individual student, group, class, or club. All submissions should be under 7 mins in length. Fest is administered by Association for Educational Communications & Technology (AECT); Event chairpersons in different states select works in different cats & age groups. Formats: 1/2". Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: Mike Maszczenski, database administrator, Int'l Student Media Festival, A.A.C.U.P.S., 2644 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401; (410) 222-5000; fax: (410) 222-5605.

IOWA INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 24-25, IA. Annual regional fest seeks videos & films under 30 min in narrative, doc, exp, & animation cats. Eligible entrants must be ind. film/videomakers from 12-state midwestern region: IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, D, WI. Best of Show award. Formats accepted: VHS, Hi8. Entry fee: $20 one entry; $25 for two. Deadline: Sept. 13. Contact: Christopher Martin, Electronic Media Division, Univ. of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0139; (319) 273-2372; martinc@uni.edu.

LOUISVILLE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., KY. Fest founded in 1990 features various types of film & video, exp or non-exp & uses various venues in Louisville area. Cash awards given for best entry in each cat. Entries must have been completed w/in preceding 3 yrs. Sponsored by Artswatch, nonprofit Louisville-based contemporary arts organization. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super-8, Beta, 8mm. Entry fee: $10-$30. Deadline: Mid-Sept. Contact: Andy Perry, executive director, Louisville Film & Video Festival, Artswatch, 2337 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206 (502) 893-9661; fax: (502) 893-9661; jap40@aol.com.

MOBIUS ADVERTISING AWARDS, Feb., IL. Open to TV, cinema, in-flight, cable & radio ads & print & package design produced, screened or aired nat'lly, regionally or locally after Oct 1 of preceding yr. Newly produced advertising as well as previously produced still appearing or reintroduced also eligible. Subject cats: automotive, children's products, clothing, commercial products, food & beverages, home care & maintenance products, home furnishings, personal products, personal articles & gift items, pet products, pharmaceutical, recreation, services, miscellaneous. Technique/specialty cats: animation, copywriting, direction, art direction, editing, humor, illustration, music, overall production, photography, product demonstration, set design, special effects, talent. Mobius Statuettes awarded. Formats accepted: 3/4". Entry fee: $100-$150. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: J.W. Anderson, chairman, Mobius Advertising Awards, United States Festivals Association, 841 N. Addison Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126-1291; (708) 834-7773; fax: (708) 834-5565.

NEW YORK EMMY AWARDS, April, NY. New York Emmy Awards, sponsored by NY Chapter of Nat'l Academy of TV Arts & Sciences, are presented for excellence in regional programming & achievements originally broadcast or cablecast in NY State or northern NJ since Sept 1 of previous yr. All entries must have been produced for & first broadcast or cablecast in NY award eligibility area & not available for viewing by more than 50% of the nat'l TV audience during eligibility period. All entries must incl at least 2/3 original content or non-original content that has been edited. Corporate, educational & industrial programming eligible for regional Emmy consideration if seen through broadcast or cable window in NY State or northern NJ. Non-English language programming eligible for entry in original language format. Cats: Programming (News & Non-News); Programming (Sports); Crafts (News, Non-News & Sports), incl on-camera achievement, news writer, writer (programming), sports writer, sports director, research, camera, sports camera, audio, original music composition, editing, sports editor, graphics, sports graphics, computer animation, lighting, set design, hair & makeup, courtroom art, off-camera achievement; Awards to Stations/Programming Services, incl editorial & community outreach station project. Formats: 3/4". Entry fee: $75 Academy Members, all others $150. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: Debbie Feldstein, exec. dir., New York Emmy Awards, Int'l Council of NATAS, 1560 Broadway, Ste 503, New York, NY 10036; (212) 768-7050; fax: (212) 764-5427.

NOMAD VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct., WA. Founded in 1992, fest is West Coast touring venue of about 15 shorts, w/ stops in Port Townsend, Seattle, Portland & San Francisco. Dedicated to video & film "no-budget" work that is noncommercial & alternative to mainstream values, works of highly personal or original vision using video or film in unexpected ways. Selected works sent written audience responses from 4 cities, plus media reviews & publicity materials. No fees, prizes or themes. Sponsored in part by ParaTheatrical ReSearch, a WA nonprofit intermedia arts group "devoted to the dynamic interaction of multiple media." Formats: 1/2", Hi8 Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Camille Hildebrandt, curator, Nomad Video Festival, Box 161, Pt. Townsend, WA 98368; (206) 781-5691.

PAN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 29-Feb. 9, CA. Founded in 1992, fest presents latest & best features, shorts & docs from Africa, Caribbean, Latin

America, Europe, South Pacific, Canada & U.S. Films must be by or about people of African descent. Films cover several themes (love, politics, adventure, mystery, comedy & drama) that showcase complexity & diversity of African peoples. About 50 productions annually showcased, for audiences estimated at 15,000. Special programs incl children's fest & student fest. Fest held at Magic Johnson Theater (Magic Johnson is co-chair) and at Laemmle Theatre Center. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Ayuko Babu, exec. dir., Pan African Film Festival, Box 2418, Beverly Hills, CA 90213; (213) 295-1706; fax: (213) 295-1952.

PEACHTREE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., GA. Founded in 1994, fest dedicated "to films for film lovers." Incls tribute to film personality, filmmaker retro, panel discussions, parties & children's program, along with at least a dozen Atlanta premieres of domestic & foreign features. Audience Award given; other special awards may also be created. Each yr, 1 evening devoted to films of selected country. To submit feature or short, send preview cassette w/ publicity info. All submissions automatically considered for Metropolitan Film Society's yr-round screening series. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8, Beta, 8mm. Entry fee: $15. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Michelle Forren, exec. dir., Peachtree Int'l Film Festival, Metropolitan Film Society, 2180 Pleasant Hill Rd, Ste A-5221, Duluth, GA 30136; (770) 729-8487; fax: (770) 263-0652; mfs@ilcnet.com.

PRIZED PIECES INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO COMPETITION, Nov., OH. Major biennial media event, estab in 1981, honors, & showcases most recent positive, non-stereotypical Black film/video productions that address issues & concerns of people of African descenty. Awards given in following cats: Youth/Teens, Drama, Docu-drama, Music Video, News, Comedy, Exp, Content Shorts, Public Affairs-Studio based, Public Affairs, Documentary (historical & cultural). Special cats: Best Black Ind Producer, Best Student Film/Videomaker (must have been produced in preceding 5 yrs while entrant was student), Emerging Artist & Oscar Micheaux Award (honoring African American media professionals "whose works & spirit most closely embody those of Micheaux: dedication, creativity, competence, persistence & strength of character"). Awards include cash awards for 1st place winners, as well as plaques of recognition for 1st through 3rd places; certificates for special merit & community choice awards. Entries must have been produced in preceding 2 yrs. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", 8mm. Entry fee: $20-$60. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Jacqueline Tshaka, coord./Beth Espy, ass't coord., Prized Pieces Int'l Film & Video Competition, National Black Programming Consortium, 929 Harrison Ave., Ste 101 Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 299-5355; fax: 299-4761.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, CA. Founded in 1982, fest has grown to be one of largest & most prominent showcases for latest & best works from Asian America & Asia, offering unique mix of small number of features (20-30) w/ strong ind & exp works, for total of 100-120 works. It is "lively venue for filmmakers, industry & Asian communities" from throughout world & is also an ideal launching vehicle for West Coast. Extensive local coverage by daily & weekly newspapers, tv & radio, plus industry press. Special events, panel discussions, installations, galas, & other activities round out program. Fest sponsored by National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), exhibitor & resource center for funding, production, distribution & broadcast of Asian American, Asian Pacific American & Asian works. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Mid Oct. Contact: Paul Yi, fest director, San Francisco Int'l Asian American Film & Video Festival, NAATA, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl. San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: (415) 863-7428.

SARASOTA FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., FL. Founded in 1989, fest "offers film lovers & film industry professionals the opportunity to experience the finest, contemporary French films in one of Florida's finest beach resorts." All films must be French language (only N. American fest devoted completely to French films), & either U.S. or world premieres & accompanied by directors & stars. Films chosen by artistic director Molly Haskell; about 25 showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Patricia Richmond, managing director, Sarasota French Film Festival, Asolo Center for the Performing Arts, 5555 North Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34243; (813) 351-9010 ext 4300, fax: (813) 351-5796.

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, Jan., UT. Founded in 1985 to "recognize ind filmmaking in all of its diversity," Sundance is premiere U.S. competitive showcase for new ind films; many important works have premiered at fest & launched theatrical lives. Showcase for domestic & int'l ind films & incls competition of new American ind feature films, non-competitive program of foreign feature films, & short films. Both dramatic & doc entries must have significant U.S. financing & be completed no earlier than Oct 15 of preceding 2 yrs. Running time for all dramatic film entries must be no less than 70 mins, & for doc films no less than 50 mins. Entries may not open theatrically before Feb 1 of yr of fest in more than 3 N American markets or be broadcast nat'ly. Entries may not play in more than 1 domestic film fest prior to Sundance. Films produced, financed or initiated by major motion picture studio not eligible for competition; however, any film conforming to above guidelines & produced, financed or initiated by ind division of studio, or purchased by studio after completion, eligible. Foreign feature films (less than 51% U.S. financed) not eligible for Competition, but may be submitted for consideration for fest screening & must be subtitled in English. Short films not eligible for Competition, but may be submitted for fest screening. Running time for all dramatic short film entries must be less than 70 min. & running time for all doc shorts must be less than 50 min. One rep of each Competition film will be invited to attend as fest's guest. Films selected for Competition compete for Grand Prize, Cinematography Award, Audience Award (popular ballot) & Filmmakers' Trophy (filmmakers' ballot). Films selected in dramatic cat will

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also be competing for Screenwriters Award & films in Doc cat also compete for Freedom of Expression Award. Films selected for Competition become eligible for inclusion in Sundance Film Festival in Tokyo (SFFT). American films selected in short film cat eligible for special award. About 200 works selected for each fest, & large audience of 75,000 incls major distributors, programmers, journalists, critics & agents. Extensive int'l press coverage. Fest's administrative address: Sundance Institute, Box 16450, Salt Lake City, UT 84116. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" or 1/2" (preferred). Entry fee: $20-$50. Deadline: Mid-Oct. Contact: Geoffrey Gilmore, director of programming/John Cooper or Christian Gaines, programmers, Sundance Film Festival, 225 Santa Monica Blvd., 8th fl., Santa Monica, CA 90401; (310) 394-4662; fax: (310) 394-8553.

TELLURIDE INDEPENDENT FILM AND SCREENWRITERS FESTIVAL, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, CO. Noncompetitive fest dedicated to spirit & advancement of ind filmmaking & screenwriting; viewing fest & informative seminar. Ind films & film-in-video formats (of all genres) shown, along w/ selected screenplays that will receive readings. Entries selected receive complimentary airfare from Denver-Telluride, 4-day luxury accomodations, 1-day ski pass & equipment rentals. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Michael Carr, c/o Queso Prods, Box 1007, Telluride, CO 81435; indiefest @infozone.org; http//telluridemm.com/indifest.html.

THREE RIVERS FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., PA. Founded in 1982, this is non-competitive feature fest presenting 30-40 films at 5 area theaters. Also sidebar of short films & videos. Recently completed films with or without distributors considered for acceptance. 14-day fest is heavily promoted throughout the region via print & broadcast media; 50,000 fest brochures published. Cats incl American Mavericks, World Cinema, Special Premieres & Midnight Madness. American inds "are always a fest highlight, foreign features are always appreciated & the Midnight Madness screenings always attract the oddest audiences." Limited funds available for personal appearances. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: Director of Exhibitions, Three Rivers Film Festival, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, 477 Melwood Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; (412) 681-5449; fax: (412) 681-5503.

VIDEO TUSCULUM, Nov., TN. 2 day nat'l fest seeks videos produced on consumer (VHS, VHS-C, SVHS, Hi8) equipment. Workshops & fest aimed at students & ind producers. Cash prizes awarded. Cats: Ind, Middle School, High School, College, Class Project. Formats: 1/2", Hi8. Entry fee: $6. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: Wess duBrisk, Video Tusculum, Box 5638, Greeneville, TN 37743; (615) 636-7300 x340; fax: (615) 638-7166.

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, IL. WIDC is largest & longest running women's fest in country, founded in 1979 & held every yr in celebration of Women's History Month & Int'l Women's Day. Fest features work of nearly 100 ind film & video artists from around world (drawn from nearly 600 entries) & seeks works that "represent a diverse cross-section of women's ideas; bringing to audiences innovative work that isn't ordinarily accessible through mainstream media." All genres & lengths presented. Audiences estimated at 4,000. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $30 nonmembers/$20 members. Deadline: Sept. 20. Contact: Wendy Quinn, program director, Women in the Director's Chair Festival, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave., #202 Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-4988; fax: 281-4999.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Spring, OR. Founded in 1975, this is annual juried survey of outstanding work by grade & high school students in Northwest (OR, WA, ID, MT, AK). Three-person jury reviews entries & assembles program for public presentation; work grouped by age. Judges Certificates awarded. About 30 films & videos selected. Entries must have been made w/in the previous yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Entry fee: None. Contact: Ellen Thomas, Young People's Film & Video Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 Southwest Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205-2486; (503) 221-1156; fax: 226-4842.

Foreign

ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL CINEMA, Oct., Canada. All types of films, incl fiction, doc, & animation, accepted. Fest, now in 15th yr, programs over 80 short, medium & feature-length films during run in Rouyn-Noranda in Québec. Past editions have programmed films from more than 20 countries. All entries must have been completed after Jan 1 of preceding yr & not shown commercially in Canada. Awards: Grand Prix Hydro-Québec, awarded by public to most appreciated feature in competition; Prix Télébec, presented to best short or medium-length feature by regional jury ($1,000 prize); Prix Animé, awarded by public to most appreciated animation film in competition. Special presentations for students held during 3 fest days. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette Entry fee: None. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Jacques Matte, director, Abitibi-Témiscamingue Festival of Int'l Cinema, Festival du Cinéma Int'l en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 215 Ave. Mercier, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, Canada J9X 5W8; (819) 762-6212; fax: (819) 762-6762.

AMIENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AND MARKET, Nov. 8-17, France. Competitive showcase focuses on films that explore cultural identity, minority groups & ethnic issues, w/ particular emphasis on little-known cinemas & multicultural production from throughout the world. Feature-length, short, fiction, or doc films addressing identity of a people or ethnic minority, racism, or issues of representation & differences eligible. In competitive section, entries must have been completed btw Sept of previous yr & Oct of yr of edition & be unshown in France. Awards: Grand Prix to best feature (fiction); Jury Award, "Ville d'Amiens" Award; Grand Prix to best short film, Grand Prix to best doc. Each yr the fest pays tribute to a director & a country. Programs this yr: South Africa, Shohei Imamura, European Suburbs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" Entry fee: None. Deadline: Sept 8. Contact: Jean-Pierre Garcia, managing director Amiens Int'l Film Festival & Market, Festival Int'l du Film d'Amiens, Association pour les Journées Cinématographiques d'Amiens, 36 rue de Noyon, 8000 Amiens, France; tel: 011 33 22 91 01 44; fax: 011 33 22 92 53 04.

AMSTERDAM INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Dec. 4-8. The Netherlands. Now one of important int'l fests on int'l doc circuit, a location for meeting filmmaking colleagues, ind producers, film buyers & possible financiers. 1995 featured about 150 docs. Programs: Competition Programme, shows approx 25 films in competition for Joris Ivens Award of Hfl. 10,000); Reflecting Images (info program designed to stimulate discussion on new doc trends); Top 10, selection of 10 favorite docs of well-known filmmaker; Highlights of the Lowlands; Retro Sections; Thematic Programmes; Video Programme; workshops, seminars, debates & a forum on int'l co-financing of docs also held. Films in competition may be any length; in 35mm or 16mm (entries shot on video must be transferred to film); completed after Aug 1 of preceding yr; & not screened or broadcast in Netherlands prior to fest. Video Programme accepts docs of any length which are shot on film or video, but finished on video, completed after Aug 1 of preceding yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Jake Witteveen, office manager, Amsterdam Int'l Documentary Film Festival, Int'l Documentary Filmfest Amsterdam, Festival Office, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, 1017RR Amsterdam, The Netherlands; tel: 011 31 20 627 3329; fax: 011 31 20 638 5388.

AUTRANS INTERNATIONAL SNOW, ICE AND ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL, Dec., France. Now in 13th edition, compet fest, open to professional & non-professional filmmakers, looks for films which "contribute positively to knowledge on the one hand of the snow & ice world & the other to developing & exalting human resources in adventure & evasion." Entries may incl snow & ice films, sporting & sports teaching films, social life & ethnology films, adventure & exploration films & expedition doc films. Entries should have been completed in previous 4 yrs. Awards: Grand Prix d'Autrans (50,000FF for fiction, 15,000FF for doc) and to best sporting or sports teaching film, social life & technology film, adventure & exploration film, expedition doc, snow & ice film, & young director. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Chiocca Mirreille, general secretary. Autrans Int'l Snow, Ice & Adventure Film Festival. Festival Int'l du Film d'Autrans-Neige et Glace, Aventure, Evasion, Centre Sportif Nordique, 38880 Autrans (Vercors), France; tel: 011 33 76 95 30 70, fax: 011 33 76 95 38 63.

BANFF FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN FILMS, Nov. 1-3, Canada. Now in 21st yr, fest is juried int'l film competition which seeks out best films & videos on mountains & their spirit of adventure. Entries compete in 6 cats: Grand Prize ($2,000), Best Film on Climbing ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Sports ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Environment ($2,000), People's Choice Award ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Culture ($2,000) & Bill Roberts Award for Young Filmmakers for films that demonstrate "best spirit of alpine climbing or mountaineering adventure or promise of a creative film or tv talent" by filmmakers under 25 w/ max of four yrs of amateur film or tv experience ($500). Winning films become part of int'l tour, for which producers are paid fee. Entries can be any

duration, either narrative or story form, animated or exp art form. Fest situated in heart of the Canadian Rockies & has become one of largest of its kind in world, attracting audiences of over 6,000 annually. Also features int'l guest speakers, adventure trade fair, mountain craft sale, climbing wall & seminars on mountain subjects. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $50 Cdn. Deadline: Sept. 20. Contact: Lisa Brent, Banff Festival of Mountain Films, Banff Center, Box 1020, Stn. 38, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0; (403) 762-6441; fax: 762-6277; MFF@BanffCentre. ab.ca;http:// www.banffcentre.ab.ca/MFF/.

BARCELONA FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO, Jan., Spain. Now in its 3d yr, fest shows int'l selection of video art, ind docs, alternative tv channels, video combat & video performance, w/ about 300 tapes under its selection. Held in Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, which is a co-sponsor of fest & accommodated 2,500 people at the last round in 1995. Rental fee of approx 8,000 ptas. ($65) will be paid for works selected for showing. Formats: 3/4," 1/2," Beta (preferably PAL). Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Sept. Contact: Núria Canal/Joan Leandre/Toni Serra, Barcelona Festival of Ind Video, Mostra de Video Ind, Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, Casa de Caritat Montalegre, 5, Barcelona, Spain; tel: 011 34 93 41 20781; fax: 011 34 93 41 20520.

BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF GAY AND LESBIAN FILMS, Oct., Spain. Debuting in 1995, noncompetitive fest, 1st of its kind in Spain, organized to "raise general awareness of homosexuality." Sections: Pink & Purple (current features), Homage (prizewinning films from various int'l film fests), Special Screening (Centenary of the Birth of Cinema, showing very 1st gay & lesbian images) & Stonewall (new Queer Cinema). All lengths considered. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Aug. Contact: Xavier-Daniel, director, Barcelona Int'l Exhibition of Gay & Lesbian Films, Mostra Internacional de Cinema Gai i Lesbic, Casal Lambda, Carrer Ample 5, 08001 Barcelona, Spain; tel: 011 34 3 412 72 72; fax: 011 34 3 412 74 76.

BELFORT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW DIRECTORS, Nov., France. Competitive fest is open to 1st, 2nd or 3rd films. Entries may be full length or short, fiction or doc, film or TV production, recently produced & not shown in more than 2 fests of similar nature or commercially distributed in France. Jury & audience of fest award authors cash prizes. Fest also incls info section "Vivre la mémoire du cinéma." Aim of fest "is to propose new films, to give them an audience, sometimes to allow the discovery of a new talent, to defend a certain idea of the cinema." Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette Entry fee: None Deadline: Late Sept. Contact: Richard Gorrieri, coord., Belfort Int'l Festival of New Directors, "Entrevues" Festival du Film Belfort, Cinémas d'Aujourd'hui, Direction des Affaires Cul-turelles, Hotel de Ville, 90020 Belfort Cedex, France; tel: 011 33 16 84 54 24 43; fax: 011 33 16 84 54 25 26.

BILBAO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY AND SHORT FILMS, Nov., Spain. Competitive fest specializing in shorts & docs,

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held annually under theme Understanding Betw Men Through Pictures. This yr marks 38th edition of fest, which is FIAPF-recognized. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs & no longer than 30 mins. Films which have won awards in European int'l fests not eligible for competition sections. Awards: Int'l Jury Prize, Grand Prize of Bilbao Festival (400,000 ptas); Grand Prize for Spanish Films (350,000 ptas); Grand Prize for Basque Films (350,000 Ptas); Gold Mikeldi for Animation (250,000 ptas); Silver Mikeldi for Animation (150,000 ptas); Gold Mikeldi for Documentary Films (250,000 ptas); Silver Mikeldi for Documentary Films (150,000 ptas); Gold Mikeldi for Fiction (250,000 ptas); Silver Mikeldi for Fiction (150,000 ptas); Silver Caravel of Instituto Iberoamericano de Cooperacion (500,000 ptas). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid-Oct. Contact: Festival Director, Bilbao Int'l Festival of Documentary & Short Films, Festival Internacional de Cine de Bilbao Documental y Cortometraje, Colón de Larreátequi, 37-4 Dcha Apdo. 579, 48009 Bilbao, Spain; tel: 011 34 4 24 86 98; fax: 011 34 4 424 56 24.

BRNO SIXTEEN, Oct, Czech Republic. Founded in 1959, fest, sponsored by Centre of Culture & Info in Brno, is annual int'l competition for noncommercial feature films & videos. Entries must not have been produced commercially & for commercial use; amateurs, freelance artists & film school students are eligible for competition in those cats. Advertising, political & animated films are not eligible. Awards: Golden, Silver & Bronze Medals; special awards for individual creative components; & financial or material prizes, incl award of 10,000CAK for "most successful film of young author." Entries must have been completed in previous 3 yrs & not submitted to previous editions. Entry fee payable only after notification of acceptance. Fest will pay for 3 days of accommodation for 1 rep per film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Entry fee: $12. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Sárka Tryhuková, Brno 16, Brnenská Sestnactka, Kulturnî a informacnî centrum mesta Brno, Radnická 4, 658 78 Brno, Czech Republic; tel: 011 42 05 4221 6139 42; fax: 011 42 05 4221 4625.

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SUPER 8 FILM AND VIDEO, Nov., Belgium. Founded in 1978. Competitive fest began as one of the world's major showcases for super 8 film & now programs all genres of super 8 & video. More than 60 countries participate. Fest welcomes many different disciplines, incl painting, photos, sculpture & performance by artists, & workshops on new technologies. Entries must not have been broadcast in world premiere. Cash awards go to Best Director, Best Production, Best Doc, Best Scenario, Best Photo; Jury Special Award. Each yr a new country spotlighted & special programs have been set up by different countries. Program also incls retros, computer animation, video dance & short films. Formats: Super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Sept. Contact: Robert Malengreau, fest director Brussels Int'l Festival of Super 8 Film & Video, Mondial de la Video, Rue Paul Emile Janson, 12, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; tel: 011 322 649 3340; fax: 011 322 649 3340.

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 15-25, Belgium. Founded in 1972, this competitive fest for general interest films annually shows about 100 features & 120 shorts. European features & shorts eligible to compete for Golden Iris Award. Sections incl European Competition, Kaleidoscope of the World Cinema, Belgian Focus with a National Competition, Special Events & Tributes. Feature entries should be over 60 mins, & shorts should be under 20 min. Formats: 35mm. Deadline: Late Oct. Entry fee: None. Contact: Christian Thomas, managing director, Brussels Int'l Film Festival, Chaussée de Louvain 50, 1210 Brussels, Belgium; tel: 011 322 218 5333; fax: 011 322 218 1860.

CAIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Egypt. Now celebrating its 20th anniv as competitive FIAPF-recognized fest w/ objective "to spread artistic taste, to promote better understanding among the various nations of the world community & to be a progress report on development in the art & in the world film industry." Fest sections incl Competition & Out of Competition, which incls fest of fests, info section, retro, tributes, special sections, & film market. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & not participated in competition in other int'l competitive fests. Int'l jury awards following: Prize for Best Film (Golden Pyramid); Special Jury Prize (Silver Pyramid); Best Actress/Actor; Best Direction; Best Script; also prize for best artistic contribution (presented to director). 2nd int'l jury awards Naguib Mahfouz Prize for 1st work of director calling for human values. Nearly 200 films shown yrly (about 20 in competition), w/ large line-up of American films. Parallel market for features & TV productions on film & video & is attended by about 70 companies. Formats: 35mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid-Sept. Contact: Saad Eldin Wahba, president, Cairo Int'l Film Festival, 17 Kasr El-Nil Street, Cairo, Egypt; tel: 011 20 2 392 3562; fax: 011 20 2 393 8979.

CHATEAUROUX INDEPENDENT CINEMA ENCOUNTERS, Dec. 12-15, France. Ind films of all genres focus of fest. Competition awards Cad d'Or, Cad d'Argent, Prix du Public. Cash prizes total 20,000FF. Special out of competition sections incl several programs such as retro; Programme Light Cone (exp cinema), Nuit du Cinéma, cinematographic & music performances. About 50 films showcased each yr. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, super 8. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Pierre Laudijois, president, Chateauroux Independent Encounters, Rencontres du Cinéma Indépendant de Chateauroux, Bande A Parte, 16 rue de Metz, 36000 Chateauroux, France; tel/fax: 011 33 54 34 80 04.

FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY FILM, Nov. 29-Dec. 7, Italy. One of longer running int'l fests completely devoted to doc film. This yr, in addition to traditional competition section (open to docs completed after Sept. 1, 1995), fest will be dedicated to theme "The Human & the Divine—Man & the Supernatural: Past & Present," considering the search of modified states of consciousness, w/ special focus on use of psychotropic drugs; doc. & fiction films as well as workshops presented on that subject. Comp entries must be Italian premieres; participation restricted to films invited by fest itself. Int'l jury awards prizes to Best Doc (20 million lires) & Best Research Film (5 million lires); & Giampaolo Paoli silver plaque to best

ethnoanthropoliogical film (rights acquisition for broadcast). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 34/", Beta; VHS for preselection only. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Mario Simondi, secretary general, Festival dei Popoli Int'l Review of Social Documentary Film, Via dei Castellani 8, 50122 Florence, Italy; tel: 011 39 55 294 353; fax: 011 39 55 213 698.

GIJON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, Nov., Spain. Recognized by FIAPF & CIFEJ, fest celebrates its 34th anniv this yr. Fest aims to "present the newest tendencies of young cinema worldwide." Shows films where youngsters get involved with their concerns & their lives. Sections incl official section for films in competition, for long or short films produced after Jan 1 of preceding yr; official section for films out of competition, w/ specific thematic which may interest fest attendees & for films produced after Jan 1 of preceding yr. Info section incls Outlines, Cycles, Retros of films "adding certain cultural elements considered to be interesting to young spectators." Awards: Principado de Asturias to Best Feature & Best Short, Best Director, Best Actress, Best Actor, Gil Parrondo Prize to Best Art Direction, Special Prize of Jury. Jury of 50 young people ages 17-29 award the Prize of Young Jury to Best Short film & Best Feature. Gijon awards Certificate of Participation to all films selected for official section. Contact in US: Juan Dapena, Gijon Int'l Film Festival, 43 West 16th Street, Suite 6B, New York, NY 10011; tel/fax: (212) 647-9647. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Jose Luis Cienfuegos, dir., Gijon Int'l Film Festival for Young People, Festival Internacional de Cine de Gijon, Paseo de Begona, 24-Entlo, 33205 Gijon, Box 76 Asturias, Spain; tel: 011 34 98 534 37 39; fax: 011 34 98 535 41 52.

GOLDEN KNIGHT INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., Malta. Founded in 1962, fest is open to all productions made on film or video on any subject. Fest is divided into 3 classes: A (Amateur), B (Student) & C (Open Class). Amateur Class is for amateur productions by individuals, groups or clubs made for pleasure w/ no commercial purpose in mind; Student is open to productions made by film school students while in school; & Open Class covers all other productions. Awards: Class A-Golden, Silver & Bronze Knights & certificates of merit; Trophy & certificate of merit for best doc & animation; Malta Amateur Cine Circle Trophy for best entry from Malta resident; Class B-Golden, Silver & Bronze Knights & certificates of merit; Class C-Golden Knight & certificate of merit. All classes eligible for Sultana Cup, retainable for 1 yr, for entry best extolling merits of Malta. Certificates also awarded in all entry cats. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", super 8, 8mm. Entry fee: $15-60. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Alfred Stagno Navarra, fest secretary, Golden Knight Int'l Amateur Film & Video Festival, Malta Amateur Cine Circle, Box 450, Valletta CMR01, Malta; tel: 011 356 222 345; fax: 011 356 225 047.

GRAND PRIX INTERNATIONAL VIDEO DANSE, March, Sweden. All styles of dance on film or video eligible for competition, judged by 5 member jury of dance & video specialists. Among fest's stated

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goals are stimulation of choreographic creation using latest audiovisual techniques, encouragement of communication betw choreographers, video producers & TV station representatives, & development of high quality video programs. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Awards: Grand Prix Int'l Video Danse (honorary); awards of 15,000FF also given for cats video dance creation, stage recording, reporting & doc, dance traditions of world, music & shorts. 160 videos showcased. Formats: 3/4", 1/2" (PAL). Entry fee: 700FF. Deadline: late Oct. Contact: Jacques Menet, secretary gen., Video Danse Grand Prix Int'l, Grand Prix Int'l, Video Danse,30 Boulevard Gambetta, B.P. 143, 06130 Grasse, France; tel: 011 33 93 40 19 50; fax: 011 33 93 36 55 84.

GRENOBLE FESTIVAL OF NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT FILMS, Feb., France. Competitive biennial fest, founded in 1977, open to narrative films & docs made after Jan 1 of preceding 2 yrs & films should focus on nature, ecology, animals. Fest will provide food & lodging & participate in travel expenses for invited directors of selected films. Awards total 20,000FF, to be divided among different winners. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Oct. Contact: M. Blanc, Head Officer Grenoble Festival of Nature & Environment Films, Festival Int'l du Film Nature & Environnement, Fédération Rhone-Alpes de Protection de la Nature (FRAPNA), 5, Place Bir Hakeim, 38000 Grenoble, France; tel: 011 33 76 42 64 08; fax: 011 33 76 44 63 36.

HAVANA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA, Dec., Cuba. Sponsored by ICAIC, Cuban Film Institute, this is world's largest showcase of Latin American & Caribbean film, video & TV, as well as African cinema, African American film & docs on 3rd world topics. About 400 productions from around the world are showcased each yr, w/ half a million spectators. Entries may be made by non-Latin American filmmakers on Latin American & Caribbean issues & all entries must be dubbed or subtitled in Spanish. Int'l press coverage incls more than 100 accredited journalists. Program also incls screenings at several cinema & video venues, retros, & seminars. Award cats incl best fiction, doc, animation, editing, acting, script, photography, sound & design. Principal award, the Coral, is given to best films & videos contributing to Latin American cultural identity. Special award given for best script not yet filmed, facilitating production of winning script. Fest market, MECLA, is meeting point for Latin American cinematographers & int'l guests. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Entry fee: None. Deadline: late Sept. Contact: Ivan Giroud, Havana Int'l Festival of New Latin American Cinema, Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, ICAIC Int'l Film Distributors, Calle 23, No. 1155, Havana, Cuba; tel: 011 53 7 36702; fax: 011 53 7 333073; festival@ceniai.cu.

HUY WORLD FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, Oct., Belgium. Founded in 1961, fest is open to ind, short films completed since April of preceding yr. Int'l jury awards 3 Grand Prix to 35mm, 16mm, & super 8 productions; Gold, Silver & Bronze Medals in each cat; & 10 special prizes. Entries must be under 30 mins. About 50-60 films selected for exhibition; spe-

cial program for students. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8. Entry fee: $15. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Roger Closset, president, Huy World Festival of Short Films, Festival Mondial du Cinema de Courts Metrages de Huy, 5 rue Nokin, 4520 Antheit (Huy), Belgium; tel: 011 32 85 21 78 29; fax: 011 32 85 21 78 29.

JACA INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FILM FESTIVAL, Dec., Spain. Film & video productions about sports which help "diffusion of sports as cultural development" accepted into competitive fest. All entries must have sports as central theme, not have been produced before Jan 1 of preceding 3 yrs & have max duration of 45 mins. Official Section has following parts: short films (up to 15 mins); feature films (up to 45 mins); didactic films (productions whose aim is to teach any kind of sport). Official prizes: Grand Prize "City of Jaca" Gold Deer & 500,000 ptas; Silver Deer & 100,000 ptas for best short; Silver Deer & 100,000 ptas for best feature; Silver Deer & 100,000 ptas for best didactic production; Bronze Deer & 50,000 ptas awarded at Jury's disposition; People's Prize; & Special Prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" (PAL), Betacam. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Oct. Contact: Joaquîn Liendo, fest director, JACA Int'l Sports Film Festival, Festival Internacional de Cine Deportivo, "Ciudad de Jaca", Palacio de Congresos, Avenida Juan XXIII, 17 Apartado 33, 22700 Jaca (Huesca), Spain; tel: 011 34 974 35 60 02; fax: 011 34 974 35 56 63.

LEIPZIG INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR DOCUMENTARY AND ANIMATED FILMS, Oct., Germany. Under theme "Films of the World-for Human Dignity," this fest, founded in 1956, is one of older int'l competitive events focusing on doc. Fest program consists of Int'l Competition, special programs & retros. Competition incls cinema or TV doc films of all genres, productions on videocassette (doc & animation films) & animation films. There is also film & video market. Int'l jury awards prizes incl Golden & Silver Doves, Ecumenical Jury Prize, FIPRESCI Jury Prize, Mercedes Benz Prize. Entries for competition or info programs must not have been shown in public prior to June 1 of preceding yr. About 230 productions showcased. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Fred Gehler, director, Leipzig Int'l Festival for Documentary & Animated Films Internationales, Leipziger Festival für Dokumentor-und Animationasfilm, Box 940, 04009 Leipzig, Germany; tel: 01 34 7 980 3927; fax: 011 34 7 980 4878.

MAX OPHÜLS FILM FESTIVAL, Jan., Germany. Estab in 1980, competitive fest is particularly for young directors from German speaking countries (Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg & Germany). Features accepted for competition; fest also accepts shorts, docs, & exp works. Awards: Max Ophüls Preis (DM50,000), Filmpreis des Saalandishen Ministerprasidenten (DM20,000), Fordepreis (DM5,000), Kurzfilmpreis (DM5,000), Publicumspreis; 2 Darstellerpreise. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Christel Drawer, director, Filmfest Max Ophüls Preis, Mainzerstrasse 8, D-6611 Saarbruecken, Germany; tel: 011 49 681 39 452; fax: 011 49 681 905-1963.

MEDIOPOLIS VIDEOFEST, Feb., Germany. Presented by Mediopolis (formerly Medienoperative), fest, started in 1988, associated w/ Berlin Int'l Film Festival & attracts thousands of visitors & hundreds of accredited guests. VideoFest open to tapes of all genres & computer animation, TV works, films w/ digital parts & multimedia projects (CD-ROM, CD-1, discs, cartridge, internet) which were produced in preceding 2 yrs. Tapes may deal w/ political, social, cultural or individual topics in critical way or display innovative aspects or those which aim at furthering video medium. Sections of the fest are Main Program, consisting of best videos of past yr; Nightflight, which offers works tailored to "special tastes"; Focus (formerly known as Accents), 4-hour block of programming that integrates presentation of videos, info & discussions, providing looks at history of video, individual nations, retros, country profiles, & special subjects; Spot Series, discussions on developments in media industry. Fest awards 3 productions at DM2,500 each for outstanding work in fields of video, TV & multimedia. Other awards have incld prizes from pay TV broadcaster Premiere, local channel 1A & products & services prize of Berlin company Koppfilm. 1996 edition is changing program structure to intensify look at TV & multimedia. Fest also organizes VideoFest Tour, presenting fest highlights around world, particularly in German cultural institutions (incl several Goethe Institutes); 1995 fest had traveled to 17 countries. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, CD-ROM, CD-1, internet, installations. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Oct. Contact: Micky Kwella, fest director, Mediopolis VideoFest, Mediopolis Berlin e.V, Potsdamerstrasse 96, D-10785 Berlin 30, Germany; tel: 011 49 30 262 8714; fax: 011 49 30 262 8713; vf-info@contrib.de.

MIPCOM INTERNATIONAL FILM AND PROGRAMME MARKET FOR TV, VIDEO, CABLE AND SATELLITE, Oct. 7-11, France. More than 10,500 professionals from more than 80 countries (incl about 800 exhibitors & 2,000 companies) participate in market, held in Cannes, which is one of world's major markets for programming industry. Producers, distributors, journalists, broadcasters, buyers & co-producers conduct business annually here; market is meeting place for buying & selling program rights & setting up co-production agreements & joint ventures. MIPCOM provides hotel reservations, welcome & transport services, parties, club for participants w/ stands, int'l press services, law center, seminars & special events planning. It also publishes guide to participants (cross referenced by country, branch of industry & names of key executives), pre-news detailing major market events, a daily newspaper, & billboards. It is possible to participate w/out stand; that contract covers entrance for 3 employees, use of participants club, & listing in MIPCOM guide. US contact: Reed Midem Organization, 475 Park Avenue S., 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 689-4220; fax: (212) 689-4348. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Entry fee: varies. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Jacques Gibout, int'l sales director, MIPCOM Int'l Film & Programme Market for TV, Video, Cable & Satellite, Marché Int'l des Films et des Programmes pour la TV, la Video, le Cable et le Satellite, Reed Midem Organisation, 179 avenue

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MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS AND VIDEOS ON ART, Mar. 11-16, Canada. Annual event, which celebrates 15th edition this yr, is competitive fest for productions related to the arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, design, crafts, fashion, decorative arts, museology, restoration, photography, cinema (profiles of directors & actors, film shoots, special effects), literature, dance, music, theater. Fest not designed for exp film or video but for productions on art-related subjects. Features & shorts accepted. Sections: Creative Crossroads (films & videos in competition); Trajectories (panorama of recent films & videos); Focus (tribute to noted producer, filmmaker or distributor); Reflections (films & videos by artists); Artificial Paradise (films & videos related to cinema as art form, i.e. profiles of producers, directors, actors, scriptwriters, musicians, etc.); Time Recaptured (archival films, late artists, anniversaries). Entries in competition must have been completed in 3 yrs preceding fest; no date restrictions on other sections. Awards: Grand Prize, Jury Prize, Creativity Award, Best Portrait Award, Best Essay Award, Best Film for TV Award, Best Media Work Award, Best Educational Film Award. In 1996, fest showcased 162 works from 24 countries. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preselection on VHS. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: Mid Oct. Contact: René Rozon, director Montreal Int'l Festival of Films & Videos on Art, Festival Int'l du Cinema et de sur Video de l'Art, 640 St. Paul Street West, Suite 406, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 1L9; (514) 874-1637; fax: (514) 874-9929.

NAMUR INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Belgium. All-short film fest accepts films whose running times do not exceed 45 mins in 4 competitive cats: animation, fiction, doc, & exp. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Fest will provide hospitality (2 overnight stays & daily allowance) for filmmakers whose work is accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2", Video 8. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Jean-Luc Francois Namur Int'l Short Film Festival, Festival Int'l du Court Metrage de Namur, Media 10/10, Avenue Golenvaux, 14, 5000 Namur, Belgium; tel: 011 32 81 22 90 14; fax: 011 32 81 22 17 79.

NANTES FESTIVAL OF THREE CONTINENTS, Nov. 19-26, France. Founded in 1979, Nantes is a major European competitive forum/showcase for feature length fiction films from Asia, Africa, Latin America, & Africa. Program features 70 films (12 in competition), offering awards Montgolfière d'Or & Montgolfière d'Argent. This was one of the original fests focusing on cinema of 3rd World & it attracts several European art distributors & TV buyers. This year's program features tribute to Shanghai Studios, retro of Argentinian melodramas, w/ tribute to Carlos Hugo Christensen and program of African cinema. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: Philippe Jalladeau & Alain Jalladeau, directors, Nantes Festival of Three Continents, 19 A Passage Pommeraye, B.P. 3306, 44003 Nantes Cedex 01, France; tel: 011 33 40 69 74 14; fax: 011 33 40 73 55 22.

NATURE, MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Italy. Now in 26th yr, non-competitive int'l film fest has stated purpose to "promote & give credit to films which make a significant contribution to the work of the conservation of nature, to the protection of the human environment & of the historic architecture of cities, to the preservation of a civilization of human dimensions." Fest open to recent short, medium length & feature films, narrative & doc. Entries must refer to one of these subjects: basic ecological info; the problems of making people aware of nature & natural resources with the aim of preserving them; chemical, physical & noise pollution of soil, water & air; preservation of flora & natural landscape; preservation of fauna; nat'l parks & reserves; problems of parks & green belts; man-made landscapes; defense of historic character of towns & of their ancient buildings; organization & use of territory; safeguard & restoration of works of art & cultural heritage; public health, environmental hygiene; environmental education. 3 "Targhe d'Oro per l'Ecologia" (Gold Awards) will be awarded to organization or individuals responsible for significant contributions to safeguarding of environment. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Liborio Rao, fest director, Nature, Man & His Environment Festival, Ente Mostra Cinematografica Internazionale "La Natura, L'Uomo e il suo Ambiente", Via di Villa Patrizi 10, 00161 Rome, Italy; tel: 011 39 6 88 47 32 18.

NAVÀS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL AND VIDEO COMPETITION, Nov., Spain, Non-professional film & video directors from throughout world invited to participate in this competitive event, which accepts super 8 & VHS entries on all subjects in cats of story (fantasy, cartoon) & report (doc). Awards: Best of Festival (70,000 ptas & "El Campanar"); Story (1st prize of 35,000 ptas & trophy, 2nd prize of 20,000 ptas, 3rd prize of 8,000 ptas); Documentary (1st prize of 30,000 ptas & trophy, 2nd prize of 15,000 ptas, 3rd prize of trophy). Approx 60 productions showcased each yr. Fest founded in 1978. Formats: 1/2," super 8. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Oct. Contact: Josep. Giralt Marsinyach, Navàs Int'l Festival & Video Competition, Concurso Internacional de Cine y Video de Navàs, Foto-Film Navàs, c/Església 11, 08670 Navàs (Barcelona), Spain; tel: 011 34 93 839 02 21; fax: 011 34 93 820 40 31.

OULU INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Finland. Founded in 1982, fest organized for children & adults & has as its main goals introduction of new trends in children's films & locating distributors for children's films in Finland. Main program comprises screenings of new children's film production from throughout world, & is limited to 15 films. Special program presents world of children to adult audience; retros; & Finnish children's films. Since 1992, jury of children has awarded prize of 3,000 ecus & Kaleva newspaper's Starboy figurine to director of the best film in main program. In addition to screenings, fest program incls meetings w/ directors, exhibitions & seminars. Entries should not be shorter than 45 mins. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: None, Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Eszter Vuojala, fest secretary, Oulu Int'l Children's Film Festival, Oulun kansainvälinen lastenelokuvien festivaali, Torikatu 8, 90100 Oulu, Finland; tel: 011 358 81 314 1735; fax: 011 358 81 314 1730.

SÃO PAOLO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 18-Nov. 1, Brazil. Recognized by FIAPF, competitive fest, now celebrating 20th edition, presents 2 major sections: Int'l Perspective & New Filmmakers Competition (up to 3rd film of director). Audience makes pre-selection for jury, selecting 10 films for final judging. Fest also awards Critics Prize & Audience Prize. Feature, short & doc films of all cats & themes accepted. Entries must have been produced in preceding 2 yrs & be Brazilian premieres. Winning entries receive Bandeira Paulista, trophy made by plastic artist Tomie Ohtake. Fest offers Brazilian audiences unique opportunity to experience new developments in int'l cinema & view works that might not be otherwise seen in Brazil. About 150 films showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Sept. Contact: Festival Director, São Paolo Int'l Film Festival, Mostra Internacional de Cinema em São Paulo, Alameda Lorena, 937-Cj. 303, 01424 001 São Paolo - SP, Brazil; tel: 011 55 11 883 5137; fax: 011 55 11 853 7936; info@mostra.org; http://www.mostra. org.

TEMECULA VALLEY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 18-22. Second annual showcase of the best in romantic comedy features, short, and student films. Viewer's Choice competition. Black-tie galas, Lifetime Achievement Award, Workshop series, International Marketplace, post-screening parties, filmmakers' Q&A sessions, live entertainment. For more information: (909) 699-6267; fax: (909) 308-1414.

THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 8-17, Greece. Now in 37th yr, fest of new trends in world cinema is oldest & largest film event in Greece. Interested in targeting new generation of filmmakers as well as showcasing high quality of films by "grand talents" of int'l ind cinema. Sections incl Int'l Competition for 1st or 2nd features; Greek Film Competition & Info section for entire production of yr; Retrospectives (Krzysztof Kieslowski, Nanni Moretti & Michael Cacoyannis were honored in 1995; this yr fest is organizing retro of Bernardo Betolucci, Lucian Pintilie & Manoel de Oliveira); focus on Balkans with best films from neighboring countries; New Horizons info section; & number of special events such as galas, exhibitions, etc. Top awards incl Golden Alexander (appr. $50,000) & Silver Alexander (appr. $30,000). All participating films should be nat'l premieres. Films in competition should have been previously shown in as few as possible int'l fests. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: Michel Demopoulos, director Thessaloniki Int'l Film Festival, Secretariat of Thessaloniki Int'l Film Festival, 36 Sina Street, Athens, Greece 10672; tel: 011 30 1 361 0418; fax: 011 30 1 362 1023.

TOKYO VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., Japan. Fest for professional & non-professional video productions, founded in 1978, accepts compositions on any theme or in any style; purpose is to promote interest in video culture. Works may have been previously shown to public or not yet screened. Video Grand Prize ($4,000, 10-day round trip to Japan for 2 people, trophy & citation)/Works of Excellence (5 awards of $2,000 & $2,000 equivalent in JVC video equipment, trophy & citation) awards will be presented to com-

positions which "set new standards of excellence in video expression; stand out in describing the lives of individuals through medium of video, uniquely utilize techniques of video photography, maximize the advantage of video as a communication medium; excel in the excitement & entertainment of video games; or are other compositions that cannot be adequately rendered without employing video as a medium." Other awards: JVC Presidents Award ($4,000, 10-day round trip to Japan for 2 people, trophy & citation) for work which "most effectively expresses the enjoyment & excitement unique to a 'handmade' video composition & will stimulate others to create video works;" Works of Special Distinction; Home Video Award, for work "that best depicts the humor & pathos of daily life or a moment of personal drama." Length of entries must not exceed 20 min; compositions w/ duration of only few mins or seconds acceptable. Formats: 1/2", 3/4". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Sept. Contact: Tokyo Video Festival Tape, Tokyo Video Festival, c/o JVC Company of America, 41 Slater Drive, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407.

TORELLÓ MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Spain. Torelló's fest themes incl all aspects of mountains: mountaineering (alpinism, climbing, expeditions, excursions), mountain sports (speleology, ski, sports climbing, parachuting, canoeing-rafting, adventure), mountain environment (nature protection, flora, fauna, ethnology). Entries must have been produced in previous 5 yrs. Awards: Grand Prize "Vila de Torelló (Edelweiss of gold & 250,000 ptas) for best film; Prize Fundacio "la Caixa" (Edelweiss of silver & 100,000 ptas) for best mountaineering film; Edelweiss of silver & 100,000 ptas each for best mountain sports film, best film of mountain environment, best video; Jury Prize. Special prizes given for best photography, script & editing. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Sept. Contact: Joan Salarich, Festival Director, Torelló Mountain Film Festival, Festival Internacional de Cinema de Muntanya, Anselm Clave 5, Box 19, 08570 Torelló (Barcelona), Spain; tel: 011 34 93 859 28 99; fax: 011 34 93 859 30 00.

TOULON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MARITIME AND SEA EXPLORATION FILMS, Nov., France. Now in 28th yr, competitive fest held at Neptune Palace in Toulon is annual meeting place for sailors, underwater divers, explorers & adventure filmmakers. Entries must be about the sea or exploration (oceanology, archaeology, history, underwater exploration, ethnography, sport, environment, fiction). Entries may be feature or short & produced w/in previous 3 yrs. Awards: Golden Anchor, Silver Anchor, Bronze Anchor, French Navy Prize, ROLEX Prize for Protection of Underwater World, World Confederation of Underwater Activities Prize, Young Film Maker's Prize sponsored by French Federation of Underwater Studies & Sports, François de Roubaix Prize for Music, Press Prize, Audience Award. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4". Entry fee: 500FF. Deadline: Early Sept. Contact: Baudouin Varennes, Chief Communication Officer, Toulon Int'l Festival of Maritime & Sea Exploration Films, Festival Int'l du Film Maritime et D'Exploration, Secretariat du Festival du Film Maritime et D'Exploration, 14, rue Peiresc, 83000 Toulon, France; tel: 011 33 94 92 99 22; fax: 011 33 94 91 35 65.

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VENDOME INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY FESTIVAL, Nov., France. Fest accepts professionally produced short feature films under 30 mins (TV films may be up to 52 mins) that relate to railway activity. Cats incl internal communications, docs & reports, external communications, creative short-footage feature films, sales promotion & marketing, history of the railways, advertising & TV commercials. Works accepted from railway companies & subsidiaries, businesses & bodies that commission railway-related films, media channels, local authorities & associations, film producers, directors, cinema schools & universities. Awards: Grand Prix; Prize awarded by town of Vendome; Cat Prize awarded on the basis of number & quality of films in each cat; special prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Oct. Contact: Georges Ragot Vendome Int'l Railway Festival, Festival Int'l du Film Ferroviaire Vendome, Secrétariat du Festival Int'l du Film Ferroviaire, 9, quai de Seine, F93584 Saint-Ouen Cedex, France; tel: 011 33 54 77 29 35; fax: 011 33 54 80 21 64.

VOX ART VIDEO FESTIVAL OF SEA ART, Dec., Croatia. Founded 1994 & sponsored by Croatian & some int'l sponsors. Fest dedicated to programming videos on all kinds of art in sea surrounding. Best works from fest showcased on local TV in Croatia & Europe & producers get special payments if tv station buys work. Entries must be between 5 & 30 min. & completed w/in preceding 3 yrs. Awards: 1st place in each cat awards 14 day vacation on Croatian Adriatic coast; 2nd place in all cats awards art paintings of Croatian painters; 3rd place awards special art presents. About 100-150 productions are programmed each yr. Formats: 1/2" (PAL). Entry fee: $35-$50. Deadline: Late Oct. Contact: Pero Vidakovic, director, Vox Art Video Festival of Sea Art, Vox Art Video Festival, Morske Umdetnosti, Pero Vidakovic, Karamana 4, 58000 Split, Croatia; tel: 011 385 21 45384; fax: 011 385 21 343045.

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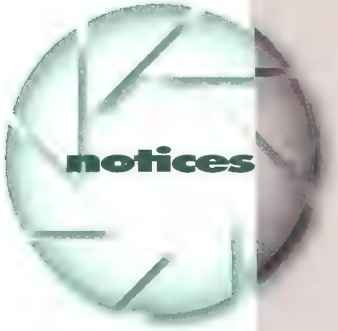
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INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, a monthly screening program seeks experimental, avant-garde, documentary, narrative, and altogether uniquely diverse films and videos. Possible monetary renumeration. Submit your films and/or videos on 1/2" or 8mm video. Clearly label tapes with title, length, name, address and phone number. Include SASE if you wish tapes returned. To submit your work or for more information, contact Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313A Seattle, WA 98121 (206) 282-3592 joel@speakeasy.org.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX, ind. producer offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in series of 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, a Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, is accepting all genres, under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172, wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; http:// freenet. buffalo.edu/~wheel.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia & Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For more info contact Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BURLE AVANT is curating "530 Lines of Resolution," a digital video art night at Den of Thieves, located on the corner of Houston St. and Eldridge St. on the lower east side in New York City. Video artists are encouraged to submit works, no entry fees required. Send NTSC VHS tapes under 15 minutes in length, by UPS or hand deliver to 530 Lines of Resolution, c/o The Outpost, 118 North 11 St., 4th fl, Brooklyn, NY 11211 (718) 599-2385.

Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

FILMMAKERS! Submit your shorts to "Show Your Shorts," a cable access prorgam on ch. 34 which airs on the first Sunday of every month at 4:30 PM. Send VHS copies of films no longer than 20 minutes in length to Catherine Delbuono, P.O. Box 9487 NY, NY 10011.

FROG PRODUCTIONS seeks student/ind. fims & videos for cable access TV show. Any length/genre, VHS preferred, 1/2" or 3/4" acceptable. Include info about work artist, SASE if return desired. Fred W. DeVecca, Frog Prods, Box 158, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.

GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for *Living With AIDS*, a half-hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, *Living with AIDS* Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8 min.) videos produced by teens or adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone # to: *In the Mix*, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016 attn: student video.

NEW DAY FILMS, the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. (914) 485-8489.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS, series broadcasting selected works statewide on public TV, seeks works of any genre (except corporate/instructional) produced by ind. artists currently residing in NC. Modest monetary compensation & telecast filmmaker interview of artist for works selected. Entry fee: $15 for individuals, $5 for students & NC Media Arts Alliance members; separate fee for each submission. Contact Ellen Walters, NC Visions, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg., UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax 5039; ncvision@hamlet.uncg.edu.

OCULAR ARCADE, new on ACTV in Columbus, OH, showcases ind. video (art, doc, experimental). Send Hi8, VHS, or 3/4" dub to: *Ocular Arcade*, D. Master, 135 West 1st Ave., Columbus, OH 43201.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/Williamsburg area of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Please call or send SASE for info: OCULARIS, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE currently seeking experimental, avant-garde, ind., underground, alternative, psychedelic, political/social, animation, shock, music, schizophrenic, doc., short films & videos for weekly late night TV program & local screenings. Submit VHS tape/info to Peripheral Produce, Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240-0835 (SASE for return).

PROGRESSIVE PROPOGANDA seeks films/videos that counter right-wing representations & ideologies for a screening at Art in General in NYC in Oct., '96. No entry fee. Deadline: Aug 15. Preference for short new work (3-5 min). Send VHS tapes for preview & SASE for return w/ name, address, phone, description & running time to *Progressive Propaganda*, c/o Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013.

REAL TV is looking for dynamic videos: news, weather, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." *Real TV*, a syndicated, daily video magazine, will showcase compelling videos from around the world - from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the 90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact *Real TV*, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

SAN FRANCISCO SHORT FILMS, a new organization dedicated to supporting the short narrative film as an unique art form, seeks films under 35 min. for screening programs. Filmmaker must be resident of 415, 510, 408, 707, 916, or 209 area codes in Northern CA. Films must have been completed on or after Jan. 1, 1993. All formats OK, but submit preview in VHS to Box 424520, San Francisco, CA 94142. Submissions can also be brought to monthly meeting, first Thursday each month, 7 pm, at Colossal Studios, 15th St. & DeHaro.

SAUCE GALLERY AND MOMENTA ART, two alternative spaces located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, are currently accepting entries for its on-going film/video series. Their mission is to identify and exhibit campelling new work no longer than 30 minutes in length. All formats and genres. Submit in VHS, along with SASE and brief description of work, to Sauce Gallery, 173A North 3rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; attn: Lisa Schroeder (718) 486-8992 or Laura Parnes (718) 782-8907.

SEEKING WORKS by ind. filmmakers. 16mm, 8mm & video for screening series in downtown Manhattan. Send VHS copy to Leslie Napoles, c/o CRC, 7th fl., 435 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast. Submit to: EDGE TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED for exhibitions/screenings & collection of essays considering the relationships between Middle East & the West on personal or geo-political scale. Will be looking at crises of identity, nationalisms/borders, naming, gender/sexuality, class & exoticization of difference. Send documentation of work in any medium, w/ postage if return requested: Public Domain, 186 Avenue B, #5, New York, NY 10009; ph/fax (212) 982-8967.

SUPER-8 FILM OPPORTUNITY Send previews of short films no more than 20 minutes in length on VHS or Super-8 prints. No originals will be screened. Also enclose short bio, description, running time, filmography, and any stills or portraits you have. Enclose $5, SASE, and self-addressed stamped postcard. Send previews ASAP to Barbara Rosenthal, 727 Ave. of Americas, NY, NY 10010-2712 (212) 924-4893.

THE KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to c/o Joanna Spitzner, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include self-addressed envelope w/ sufficient postage.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TV-1 PRODUCTIONS seeking footage on Cuba for upcoming doc. Every aspect of life in the island welcome. Formats: Hi8, SVHS, 3/4", Beta, DVD, 8mm & 16mm. Tapes returned. Payment negotiable. For more info, please contact Marcos N. Suarez, 2102 Empire Central, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 357-2186.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA seeks VHS submissions, any style, content or length, for Student Union Gallery video installation, "Today's Special: Video Diner" in Oct. 1996. Forum for alternative videos for dialogue on a variety of issues. Send VHS, résumé, brief statement/description & SASE for tape return to: Vikki Dempsey, coordinator, Box 454, Tucson, AZ 85702; (502) 884-1354.

UNQUOTE TV, 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing new, innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, experimental, performance works under 28 min. Seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote TV*, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre and length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi 8 or 3/4 with description, name, phone & SASE to VideoSpace, attn: general submissions, 9 Myrtle St, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hour weekly show, w/ videos followed by information on the makers. Send VHS or SVHS to *World of Insanity*, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

PUBLICATIONS

AEIOU.2 (ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION INFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSE) provides descriptions & submission information on over 220 exhibition venues, nat'l & int'l, showing challenging, alternative ind. film & video. Avail. for $7 (incl. addressed mailing label) from AEIOU.2, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103.

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, a computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 854-9577.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH GRANTS 1996, providing current info on nearly 6,000 funding sources, is now available. 1,224 pp. $135 plus 10% for shipping & handling, as well as sales tax in AZ & CA. To order, contact The Oryx Press, 4041 North Central Ave., ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; (800) 279-6799.

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IFFCON '96 TRANSCRIPTS now available. Topics discussed by financiers, commissioning editors & producers during the 3rd Annual Int'l Film Financing Conference included foreign TV opportunities, int'l distribution, rallying US dollars, navigating European film funds. For a copy, send $36 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at http://www.mediaalliance.org.

MEDIANET: A Guide to the Internet for Video and Filmmakers. Available free at http://www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or e-mail rriddle@infi.net.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION offers *History for Hire: Using Cultural Resources as Film Locations*, an ongoing series illustrating the benefits & drawbacks of film prods in museums, private residencies & along historic streets. $6 per issue; 10+ copies at $3 plus shipping & handling. Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 673-4286.

NEH ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE The National Endowment for the Humanities' *30th Annual Report* is available for free. It contains descriptions of Endowment programs as well as a complete listing of all Endowment grants for fiscal year 1995. Readers may view or download the report by visiting the NEH website: http: //www.neh.fed.us For a hard copy, write or email at NEH 1995 Annual Report, Room 402, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506; email: info@neh.fed.us.

SHORT VIDEO MOVIES: To finish our handbook on the short video prod. process, we want to include your experiences w/ improvised scenarios or scripts, non-professionals or pros. Let's trade reels. Contact David Shepherd, Group Creativity, 2 Washington Sq. Vill. #70, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-7830.

THE SQUEALER, the quarterly journal produced by Squeaky Wheel (a nonprofit media arts center) puts an upstate NY spin on a wide range of media-related subjects—from reviews, essays, fiction artwork & interviews to commentary on issues affecting ind. mediamakers. Once a year, *The Squealer* publishes "State of the State," a comprehensive resource issue w/ detailed information on upstate media arts organizations, access centers, schools & coalitions. Subscriptions $15 per year. Contact Andrea Mancuso, Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; http://freenet.buffalo.edu.~wheel/.

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CREATIVE ARTS TELEVISION ARCHIVE specializes in the arts. An independent filmmaker manages several archives of filmed and videotaped arts documentaries from 1950 to date. Reasonable license fees. Overview of holdings listed under name at http://www.footage.net. Direct inquires to catarchive@aol.com. or call (860) 868-1771.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants to Jewish documentary filmmakers. The deadline for 1996 apllications is Friday August 9, 1996 at 5:00 PM. For application forms and grant guidelines, write to National Foundation for Jewish Culture at 330 Seventh Avenue. 21st fl, NY, NY 10001 ph (212) 629-0500 fax (212) 629-0508.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problems; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

KODAK OFFERS FREE FILM to 100 emerging filmmakers to help complete first or second projects. Kodak will donate up to 25,000 feet of Eastman EXR 5287 (35mm) color negative film or 10,000 feet of Eastman EXR 7287 (16mm) color negative film to new producers who purchase an equal amount of film for use on a current or future project. Application deadline: Sept. 1. For more information, contact your local Kodak rep or write: Celebration Administrator, Eastman Kodak Company, 1017 N. Las Palmas, Hollywood, CA 90038.

ON TRACK VIDEO, a leading New York-based post production facility, announces a new interactive Q & A website offering video postprōd. help & advice to industry professionals: http://www.otv.com.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax 1114; e-mail: piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr: $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

STANDBY PROGRAM is a nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to providing artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post-prod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: The Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER is dedicated to educators interested in using video technology as a learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

NOTICES





TWO GIRLS IN LOVE: Con't from p. 37

manager was Diane Straus.

Production design was four people, led by Ginger Tougas. Costumes was two people, headed by Cheryl Hurwitz, who turned her studio apartment into a fitting room/wardrobe salon for weeks before shooting and never ate any lunch.

Camera: Tami Reiker was the D.P. and there was a Second A.C. The First A.C. came and went as available.

Sound: Two people, Jeff Pullman and a boom man. But again, when they got a paying gig, they were replaced by whomever Dolly could find to work for free.

Editor: Susan Graef, who is a genius, cut the film.

The Independent: Did you have to do much in ADR (automatic dialogue replacement)?

Maggenti: Very little ADR. Randy's voiceover in the beginning, which was written in post and was not part of the original script; a couple of Evie's lines when she's in her car; ambient sound was added for the Evie-comes-to-Randy's-for-dinner scene. All the post was done by Steve Boume at Planet Ten Post—what an excellent dude! Otherwise, everything's location sound.

The Independent: Your shooting ratio increased from 2:1 the first five days to 4:1 for the rest of the shoot. Why is that?

Maggenti: Most of the dolly shots occurred after that. The film was shot pretty much in sequence for dramatic reasons, and the beginning of the film [was conceived] with less camera movement.

The Independent: Not counting the crew's personal cars, how many production vehicles did you use?

Maggenti: Four. The "production vehicle" that got Dolly, Tami, and me to the set everyday—and the camera—was also a star in the movie. There was also a rental van to move the crew around, a van for the art department, and a grip truck. Our grip and lighting package came from an excellent guy in Pittsburgh named Jim Jackson.

The Independent: Finally, the question everybody wants to know: How much was spent on food?

Maggenti: Eight thousand bucks.

Roberto Quezada-Dardon lives in New York and writes for The Independent *as well as for various Internet publications.*

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

The Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, The Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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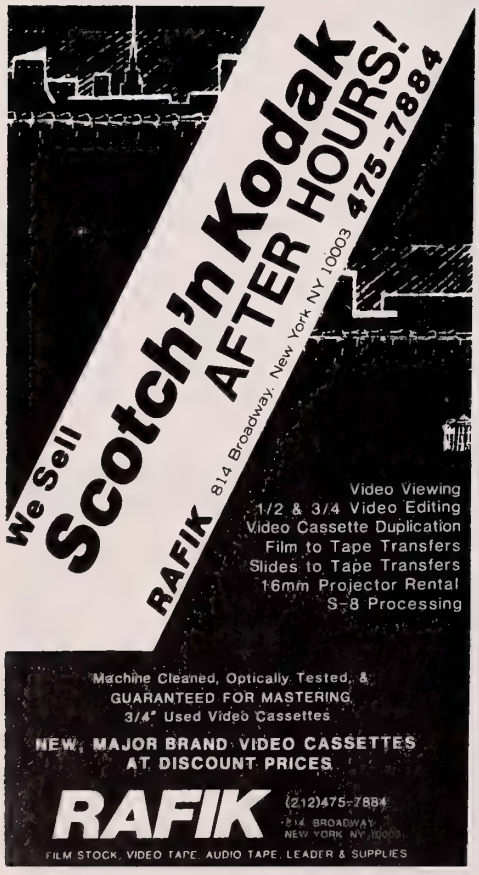
Acordia Hogg Robinson, NY, NY; Alluvial Entertainment, W. Hollywood, CA; Asset Pictures, NY, NY; Avid Technology, Tewksbury, MA; Berkano Prod., New Orleans, LA; Bjorqvist Films, Brooklyn, NY; Blackside Inc., Boston, MA; Blue Yonder Films, Tulsa, OK; Bread & Roses, NY, NY; C.A. Productions, NY, NY; Caribbean Soul Entertainment, Brooklyn, NY; Chibari Records, NY, NY; Color Lab, Rockville, MD; Cospe Prod., Paris, FR; Dasistas Creative Group, Madison, WI; Ericson Media Inc., NY, NY; FPG Int'l, NY, NY; Fallon, McElligott, Minneapolis, MN; 40 Acres & A Mule, Brooklyn, NY; Foxo Prod., Inc., NY, NY; Fuller Prod., NY, NY; Greenwood/Cooper Home Video, Los Angeles, CA; IBW Production, London, UK; Irivne Pictures, NY, NY; JCV Prod., NY, NY; KJM3 Entertainment Group, NY, NY; Light Flash Pictures, NY, NY; Lonsdale Prod., Glendale, CA; Media Consultants, Inc., Raleigh, NC; Meritage Prod., W. Chester, PA; Mikco, NY, NY; Nocturnal Films, NY, NY; Open City Films, NY, NY; Passporte Prod., NY, NY; Real Life Entertainment Inc., LA, CA; Barbara Roberts, NY, NY; Sandbank Films, Hawthorne, NY; Somford Entertainment, Los Angeles, CA; Sub Pop East, Dorchester, MA; TV 17, Madison, AL; Tribune Pictures, NY, NY; Unapix Entert, NY, NY; Washington Square Films, NY, NY; Westend Films, NY, NY; White Night Prod., San Diego, CA.

Nonprofit Members

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On behalf of all of us at FIVF, many thanks to the AIVF members who responded to our recent appeal for support:

AVF Intl., Inc., Barbara Abrash, Lee Aiges, Beatrice Alda, Janet A. Benn, Hilary Birmingham, Liane Brandon, Mark E. Caligiuri, Coulter & Sands, Inc., Dee Davis, Elisabeth C. De Boor, Maria J. De Luca, Bill Einreinhofer, Christopher Farina, Kathy M. Fredricks, Tony Gault, Julie Gustafson, David Hamlin, Ellen Hovde, Jewish Film Festival, George King, Jan L. Krawitz, David W. Lynch, Juan P. Mandelbaum, Mark Mandler, Micheal Manese, Ruben Markstrom, Nina Menkes, Muffie Meyer, Jean Nakahara, Michel Negroponte, Jack Ockford, Marcus Page, Mimi Pickering, William Poorman, Douglas Propp, Lenora Publiese, Jennifer M. Reiss, Robert Richter, Kate Deane Robinson, Henry S. Rosenthal, Lynne Sachs, Jennifer B. Sass, Roger Sherman, Patricia A. Sides, Buddy Squires, Melissa Sterne, George C. Stoney, Renee A. Sueppel, Nancy Walzog, Joni Wehrli, Robin White Owen, White Night Prod., Heather M. Winters, Pamela Yates



MEMORANDA: Cont'd from p. 80

SELF-DISTRIBUTION INITIATIVE

With our full-day August workshop, "How to Self-Distribute" (see p. 80), we are happy to inaugurate a new services initiative in self-distribution. It takes no particular powers of perception to recognize that the independent media field is facing a distribution crisis that's rapidly getting worse—and that self-distribution skills will become increasingly critical. We're constructing a well-integrated set of resources to demystify the self-distribution process. Some of them are in place or in the works, like the new editions of the *AIVF Guide to International Film and Video Festivals* and *The Next Step*, and upcoming guides to exhibitors, PBS/cable, and video stores that handle independent work. We'll make all of these resources available as databases and move that data online as the technology evolves and as the field needs it. We'll be publishing articles on this topic regularly in *The Independent*, and are assembling a "self-distribution toolkit" of reprints and other materials. Other resources as small as having sample press kits available in the library or as ambitious as a consultant/mentoring program are moving through the pipeline. We'll post regular bulletins in *The Independent* to keep you up on the program.

Whether you're an experienced self-distributor or are considering it for the first time, we'd love to hear from you. What resources are already out there that we should know about? What isn't available that we could—and should—provide? What do you need right now? Come to our event August 3, or give us a call. Contact: Pamela Calvert, (212) 807-1400 x 223.

VOTE!

The AIVF board is entirely elected by the membership, and sets policy and priorities for the organization. The following candidates are running for the four open seats this year: Susana Aikin, Richard Burnside, Mike Camoin, Douglas Conrad, Stephen Desmond, Loni Ding, Jeanne Finley, Glenn Francis Frontera, Suzanne Stenson Harmon, Peter Lewnes, Cynthia Lopez, Ruth Ozeki Lounsbury, Beni Matias, Jim McKay, Betsy Newman, Douglas Norberg, Sandra Osawa, Geoff Seelinger, Jon Stout, Mark Stumer, Sowande Tichawonna, Neil Vineberg, Bart Weiss, and Heather Winters. AIVF members will have received ballots in the mail, which must be returned to AIVF in time for the count on **August 21**. We urge you to participate in deciding who will best represent your interests.

FESTIVAL GUIDE ERRATA AND UPDATES

Dallas Video Festival
1405 Woodlawn Avenue
Dallas, TX 75208
tel: (214) 948-7300
fax: (214) 943-1776
Deadline: September 20
Dates Held: January 9-12
Special thanks to Bart Weiss for bringing these changes to our attention.

If you discover an error or change in our *Festival Guide*, *please* call Pam Calvert, (212) 807-1400 x 223, so we can publish it in the magazine and include the information in updates we will publish periodically.

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

The Guide to High Definition Video Production: Preparing for a Widescreen World, by REBO Studio in association with Clay Gordon, is the first and only book on high-definition video to focus on production, not politics. It's a practical book about what it really takes to produce programming in high- definition video starting from the very earliest days of production to the most up-to-date techniques and equipment. The acceptance of some form of high-resolution widescreen video transmission by the widescreen market seems inevitable. Film and video production professionals will find the book invaluable for its emphasis on the real-life issues involved in using high definition in film-style and live, multi-camera productions. The book is organized into sections based on the major components of a production (production through post-production, engineering, creative considerations) and includes the experiences, insights, and anecdotes of some of the most experienced high-definition producers, directors, DPs, and engineers in the business.

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Border Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Denver, CO
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

Houston, TX:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: David Mendel, (713) 529-4185

Kansas City, MO:
When: 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Los Angeles, CA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Pat Branch, (310) 289-8612

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Tucson, AZ:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Sowande Tichawonna, (202) 232-0353

MEMBERABILIA

Congratulations to AIVF members who won awards or other prizes for their work: Nora Jacobson & Aviva Kempner, 1996 Guggenheim Fellows in Film and Video. Abigail Child, Tamara Jenkins, and Lodge Kerrigan won 1995 Guggenheim Fellowships. Lisa Wood Shapiro won a grant from the Puffin Foundation for her doc *Derailment*.

Slawomir Grunberg's *Chelyabinsk: The Most Contaminated Spot on the Planet* won the Grand Prix Award at the Int'l Nature & Environmental Film Festival. *When Billy Broke His Head...And Other Tales of Wonder*, produced/directed by Billy Golfus & David Simpson, won a duPont-Columbia University "Silver Baton" for excellence in TV & radio journalism. Andrew Garrison won a grant from the Southern Humanities Media Fund for *Maxine*.

The Watermelon Woman, written/directed by Cheryl Dunye & produced by Barry Swimar & Alex Juhasz, won a "Teddy" for Best Gay/Lesbian Film at the Berlin Int'l Film Festival, Prize of the Public for Feature Film at the Int'l Festival of Women's Film in Creteil & the Audience Award for Best Feature Film at the Turino Int'l Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. Spencer Clapp's *Forever and a Day* premiered on CT public television in April. Arthur Dong's doc *Coming Out Under Fir*, won a Peabody Award. Daniel Reeves, Jocelyn Taylor, Norman Cowie & Diane Nerwen were named 1996 New York Foundation for the Arts video fellows.

The following AIVF members were named 1996 Rockerfeller Foundation Intercultural Film/Video/Multimedia Fellows: Nancy Buchanan for the CD-ROM *Developing: The Whole Picture*, Louis Massiah for the doc *10,042 Years Later...Tenants of Lenapehocking*, Jon Moritsugu for the feature *Fame Whore*, Yvonne Rainer for the experimental narrative *MURDER and murder* & Ellen Spiro for the doc *The Slab City Singles*.

Diane Best's doc *Rights of Passage* received a Silver Plaque, at the Chicago Int'l Film Festival. Sandi DuBowski's *Tomboychik* was selected for the Whitney Museum's *Lesbian Genders* series & the Jewish Museum's *Too Jewish* exhibition. Michael Sheridan's doc *Community* won a Silver Apple Award from the National Educational Media Network.

29TH STREET VIDEO, INC. (212) 594-7530

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POST PRODUCTION SERVICES

Betacam SP on-line w/ DFS500 digital FX audio mix	$95.00		
Beta-Beta (2 machine)	$75.00	Hi8--Beta	$75.00
3/4 - 3/4	$60.00	HI8-3/4	$60.00
3/4-3/4 self edit	$40.00	VHS-VHS self edit	$10.00
Amiga character generator in session (in addition to edit)	$25.00		

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WE TIMECODE YOUR HI8 TAPES

Dupes to Betacam SP	$45/hr	Dupes to 3/4	$25/hr
Dupes to VHS	$10/hr (includes tape)		
HI8-Betacam SP w/VHS time code window	$50/hr		

We are very precise and very nice

PRODUCTION SERVICES

Betacam SP package	$650.00
Pro HI8 E.N.G. package	$250.00

NOT JUST TECHNOLOGY, IDEAS!



INSURANCE ALERT, PART II

As reported in the May issue, we've been scouting for an insurance plan to replace the equipment coverage formerly offered by Kaye Insurance. We're more than happy to announce that we found an excellent alternative with Northbrook Insurance Company, the firm who wrote the original policy 11 years ago. They're delighted to welcome us back, and are offering the plan to our members on the same terms as we had with Kaye.

Members who lost coverage in April will be contacted directly by Alliance; others may call for information about the plan, which offers "all-risk" coverage (fire, theft, etc.) for owned equipment. Coverage is on a replacement cost basis if the replacement values are insured. The coverage is worldwide, subject to a $250 deductible. The rate is $3.50 per $100 of insured value, subject to a minimum of $500 annually. The bad news: due to Massachusetts insurance regulations, the plan isn't available to members located in that state.

Contact: Ira Zipser, Alliance Brokerage Corp., 990 Westbury Rd., Westbury, NY 11590; (516) 333-7300 or 465-1123l; fax (516) 333-5698.

EVENTS

"HOW TO..." AN INTENSIVE SUMMER WORKSHOP SERIES

HOW TO SELF-DISTRIBUTE YOUR WORK

If you're interested in self-distribution, don't miss this full day of seminars with film/videomakers who have undertaken the challenge of self-distribution. Panelists including **Ralph Arlyck** of New Day Films; **Joe Berlinger**, producer/director of *Brother's Keeper*, **Kathryn Bowser** of KJM3, **Lori Castronuovo**, associate producer of *The Uprising of '34*, **Ellen Bruno**, producer/director of *Satya: A Prayer for the Enemy*; and **Jay Craven**, producer/director of *Where the Rivers Flow North*, will explain the ins and outs of self-distribution, the tools you'll need, and how to reach your audience.

When: Saturday, August 3, 10 am - 6 pm
Where: AIVF office
Price: $55 member/$70 others

THE IFFM COMES TO AIVF

We are very happy to announce that we will be hosting the seminars, workshops, and one-on-ones for the new "Spotlight on Docs" program at this year's Independent Feature Film Market, a program of the Independent Feature Project. **Please Note: Because of these programs, our resource library will be closed on Thursday, September 19 and Friday, September 20.**

Developed with the help of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and supported by HBO/Cinemax, "Spotlight on Docs" will expand the program of seminars and workshops for documentarians at the Market. A "No Borders: Docs" program will also be organized in order to facilitate contact between buyers and promising works-in-progress by experienced documentarians seeking co-financing partners. In past years, the Market has showcased approximately 60 documentary works (features, work-in-progress, and shorts). In 1996, as a result of "Spotlight on Docs" they have expanded this number to 80. The dates of this year's IFFM are **Sept. 15-21**; for more information or to register, call IFP at (212) 465-8200. And look for the AIVF booth at the Market!

MEET AND GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF office. *Free; open to AIVF members only. Limited to 20 participants. RSVP required; (212) 807-1400 x 301.*

WIELAND SPECK
Director, Panorama Section, ***Berlin Film Festival***
The premier showcase for American independent film on the European festival circuit.
When: Tuesday, September 3, 6:30 pm

LEE ANN HILEMAN
Director of Development, ***Redeemable Features***
NY-based independent feature film production company headed by Ira Deutchman, former president of Fine Line. Redeemable Features acquires properties at the screenplay stage.
When: Tuesday, October 22, 6:30 pm

SUSAN WITTENBERG
Vice-President, Production and Programming, ***Ovation—The Arts Network***
New all-arts cable network with active acquisitions program.
When: Tuesday, November 12, 6:30 pm

WORKING THE WEB

Brainstorm with fellow independents on how to effectively market and distribute alternative media via the Internet—get your work out to audiences and don't get stuck in the current distribution models. *Co-sponsored with P.O.V. Interactive. Free. RSVP to (212) 807-1400 x 301.*

When: Thursday, September 26, 6:30 p.m.
Where: TBA

ADVOCACY FORUM

AIVF will sponsor its second advocacy forum in early October. Guest speakers, date, and time of the event will be announced in the October issue of *The Independent*. Contact: Cleo Cacoulidis (212) 807-1400 x 233.

OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

We're happy to announce that we have joined forces with production company NewCity's DocuClub to offer screenings of works-in-progress. The screenings take place on the **1st Monday of the month** in midtown Manhattan, and feature screenings of 1-2 works in progress with discussion following. As of the October screening, AIVF members will eligible to submit non-fiction work to the DocuClub for screening. Reservations are necessary to attend; call (212) 753-9630, ext. 171. To submit work, call Susan Kaplan at (212) 753-1326

Where: New City Productions, 635 Madison Ave., #1101 (btwn 59 and 60)

IMAGE INNOVATORS AT LINCOLN CENTER

AIVF members receive discounts on tickets to the second in the "Image Innovators" series at the Walter Reade Theater, dedicated to media artists who bring alternative views to the moving image. The fall program features winners of the 1996 New Voices, New Visions International Digital Artistic Competition, a commissioning program sponsored by Interval Research Corporation and the The Voyager Company. Voyager president **Bob Stein** will present the program featuring the winning work. Some of the judges will also appear, who this year included **Lynda Barry, Mark Pellington, Ntozake Shange,** and **Laurie Anderson**. *For more information, call the Film Society of Lincoln Center, (212) 875-5610.*

When: Thursday, October 10 (time TBA)
Where: Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center, New York
Price: $5 with AIVF member I.D.

Cont'd on p. 78

TRADE DISCOUNTS FOR AIVF MEMBERS

CALIFORNIA

Cinetopia Production
923 E. 3rd St. #112, Los Angeles, CA 90013; (213) 617-2429/Contact: Steve Choe. *Complete Arri BL4 pkg, camera, grip, truck & more. Negotiable low rates for AIVF members*

Rick Caine Productions
856 1/2 N. Occidental Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026; (213) 413-3222/ Contact: Rick Caine or Debbie Melnyk. *15% discount on Sony Betacam SP equipment, crew rentals, dups & offline editing.*

Mill Valley Film Group
104 Eucalyptus Knoll, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 461-8334/ Contact: Will Parrinello. *35% discounts on Beta SP production packages, production personnel & VHS off-line editing facilities. Rates further negotiable for selected projects.*

Studio Film and Tape
6674 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90038; (213) 466-8101/ Contact: Carole Dean. *5% discount on Kodak short-ends & recans; 10% discount on new Fuji film (20% to students w/ i.d.).*

COLORADO

MovieMaker
4730 Table Mesa Dr., Ste B-100, Boulder, CO 80303; (303) 499-6300 / Contact: Susan Lyle Kinney. *15% discount on video production services including shooting, editing, script consultation.*

PME Studios
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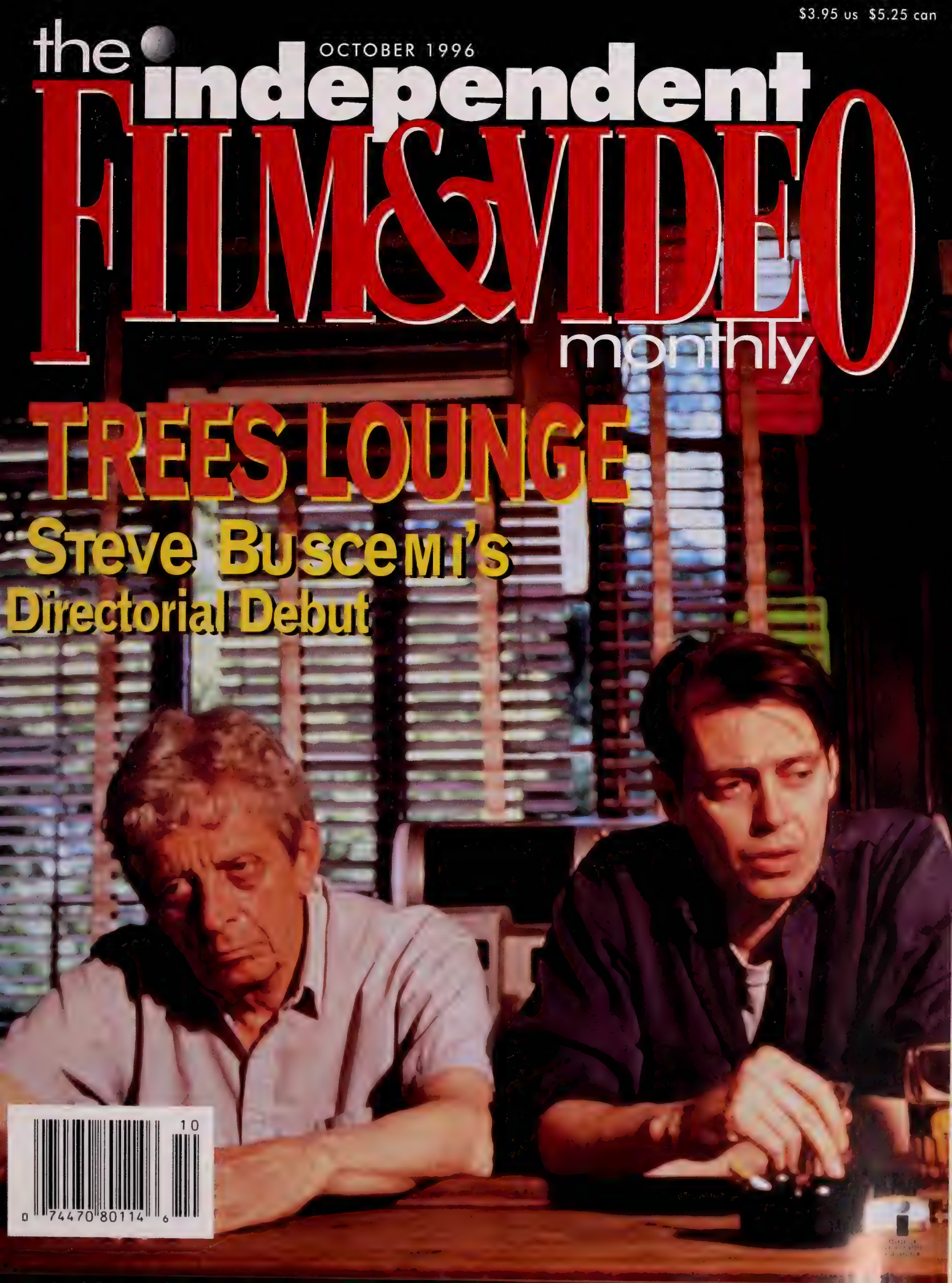
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Letters

Objectively, You're Great

To the editor:

I just wanted to commend you on your August/September issue. The issue's depth and breadth of content was excellent. I especially enjoyed the combination of interview (subjective flavor) and project statistics (objective flavor) in Roberto Quezada-Dardon's "Nothing but the Truth: A Case Study of *The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love*." Information like that is invaluable to an indie producing audience. In fact, all of the feature stories ("My Life as a Dog," "The Distribution of *Indian Summer*," and "Robert Patton-Spruill on the Making of *Squeeze*") were full of useful data you can't get anywhere else. Content is king. Keep up the great work.

Chris Pickenpaugh
Indianapolis, Indiana

Experiments in Sanity

To the editor:

Congratulations on an excellent, much-needed issue on experimental media ["Experimental Media Today," July 1996]. Having felt like a weirdo for 20-odd years for my continual obsession making experimental films, videos, and holograms and like a sell-out for having recently joined the ranks of academia, every article in your July issue gave me a fresh vision of sanity. Thank you for explaining my life choices to me, as well as to a whole new generation!

Alexis Krasilovsky
California State University, Northridge

Credit Where It's Due

To the editor,

I am pleased, of course, at the coverage *The Independent* gave to film-video programming at the Rockefeller Foundation and its recognition of Janet Sternburg's important contribution to that work ["Key Funding Figures Leave Rockefeller," July 1996]. However, I am sure that Janet is uncomfortable, as I am, at the article's failure to acknowledge all the professionals and all the teamwork that have made the program possible in the 10 years of its existence.

The original concept for the fellowship initiative came from Howard Klein and Steven Lavine, both officers in the Arts and Humanities Division a decade ago. (Howard is remembered as an originator of INPUT, and an early supporter of video art and of the earliest media centers.) They brought in John Hanhardt of the Whitney Museum [now at the Guggenheim Museum] and Jan Grossman as outside consultants to help us design a program. Bill Viola, DeeDee Halleck, Juan Downey, Jill Godmilow, Mary Lucier, Nam June Paik, John Reilly, and Julie Gustafson were all involved in bringing artists' perspectives to the plans.

Guided by this expertise and by the foundation's research, the Arts and Humanities established the Film/Video Fellowships Program in 1986. In 1988, when both Howard and Steve had moved on from Rockefeller, the foundation hired Janet to advise and consult regarding the ongoing program. She did so with all the flair and commitment that you described, under the direction of our associate director, Suzanne Sato. Together, and with the help of other staffers, advisors, and our grantees themselves, Suzanne and Janet expanded our work beyond fellowships into such arenas as training and policy to help independents. At the same time, with the help of Patricia Boero (now of the MacArthur Foundation), the program was internationalized.

When Janet and our fellowships coordinator Karen Kaplan decided to leave the program in 1995, we chose National Video Resources (NVR) to manage the fellowships competition. Now well into the second year of administering the program, Tim Gunn and Tania Blanich of NVR have ably carried on the program's dedication to independent artists under the direction of Joan Shigekawa, the foundation's new Associate Director for Arts and Humanities, who brings more than 25 years' experience in film, television, and video to the task of shaping the foundation's program in the media arts.

Janet's great talents have stimulated, extended, and enriched our work, and we are grateful for her colleagueship. If there's a legacy—and I hope there is—it's a Rockefeller Foundation legacy for which many can feel pride and take credit; most notably—of course—the artists.

Alberta Arthurs, director, Arts & Humanities
Rockefeller Foundation

The publisher responds:

What Ms. Arthurs cannot include in her letter is her own enormous contribution not only to the media field, but to the entire arts community nationwide. Her vision and grace will be missed when she leaves Rockefeller this fall. We are fortunate to have Joan Shigekawa, one of this community's most respected thinkers and leaders, to carry forward Rockefeller's critical role in supporting the independent media field.

Caveat Emptor

To the editor,

After reading Roberto Quezada-Dardon's article, "Buy Now, Pay Later: The Pros and Cons of Credit Card Financing" [June 1996], I was surprised that he could not find filmmakers against credit card financing. As a producer, I have found credit card financing to be the worst thing an independent can do.

I produced a feature called *Philly Flash* over a two-year period. It has since been sold and is being distributed. However, I am still paying for the mistake of using credit cards. My biggest mistake was assuming I'd make my money back as soon as the movie was finished. In the real world of distribution, it is probably going to take me up to four years from my "first charge."

The problem is interest. I was like many the filmmakers mentioned in your article who paid over $1,000 a month *in interest*! The production cycle of my film was two years. That means I paid over $24,000 in interest before even making a deal. WOW! That's $24,000 paid to a bank—*not to my movie*. Plus, I still had to pay back the $65,000 I charged. If you do the math, I wound up paying almost $90,000 for only $65,000 of production.

If I had decided to wait and save the money first, I would have had more time to improve my script. Plus, with that extra $24,000, I could have hired a name actor to cameo in a few scenes (and we all know how foreign buyers like name actors). Of course, like most independent filmmakers, I was impatient. I listened to the indie credo: "Just go shoot it." But when I had to take a second job to pay off the credit cards, I could no longer dedicate myself full-time to the film. As a result, production took two years instead of one.

My advice? Be patient and save your money. Use the extra time to improve your script. And finally, save the credit cards for new suits, airline tickets, and hotels for film festivals and markets. That is when you'll need the extra purchasing power. Remember, an impoverished filmmaker is to distributors like blood is to a great white shark.

Daniel Lantz
Philadelphia, PA

Beyond the Festival Circuit

To the editor:

The May *Independent* featured Yosha Goldstein's informative profile of filmmaker (and now Haiti's Minister of Culture) Raoul Peck.

California Newsreel is the North American distributor of Peck's innovative, award-winning documentary *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet*, and I must disagree with Goldstein's assertion that the film's distribution has been "limited to the festival circuit." In 1994, the film was broadcast on WNYC in New York. Since 1993, the 16mm print and videocassettes have been exhibited at numerous media arts centers and college film societies across the U.S. In addition, 300 colleges and public libraries in different regions in the U.S. and Canada have acquired videocassettes for classroom showings and for lending to their patrons. Some of these institutions have even purchased multiple copies and it continues to perform well. I would say, then, that the film has been seen and discussed by many thousands in North America.

Cornelius Moore
California Newsreel

media news

FAUX PAS DE DEUX

The Watermelon Woman is the newest NEA whipping boy

EDITED BY DANA HARRIS

ON JUNE 16, CHERYL DUNYE INTRODUCED HER film *The Watermelon Woman* to a packed house at the closing night screening of the New York Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. Before Dunye's debut feature (a comedy in which she stars as a video clerk obsessed with an obscure black actress from the 1930s) won the Teddy for Best Gay Film at the Berlin Film Festival, *The Watermelon Woman* had received a completion grant from that festival's Exposure Fund as well as a $31,500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

> "Of all the works that were given grants last year, why this one? Because it's inflammatory."
> — Terry Lawler

Six days after the New York screening, Dunye's work was attacked on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives as an "outrage" and became the latest pawn in the ongoing NEA debate.

The furor was sparked by an article in *The Washington Times* written by staff reporter Julia Duin. The headline read: "Black lesbian film likely to rekindle arts-funding furor; NEA defends graphic comedy."

While it might seem curious that the *Times* would assail the endowment for doing what Congress mandates—funding underserved and underrepresented artists and communities—such articles have become an annual event for the right-wing paper. In recent years, the *Times* has printed several NEA-hostile articles that coincided with Congressional debate about the agency's budget. In 1992 it was Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*; in 1994 it was the work of HIV-positive performance artist Ron Athey.

"[Duin] was basically trying to resurrect the campaign against the NEA," Dunye says. "We were looking for a way to be supportive of the NEA and decided we needed to participate in the interview."

Dunye says Duin also tried to solicit information from her about NEA monies that might have gone to other lesbian filmmakers, particularly through Dunye's fiscal sponsor, Women Make Movies, a New York City-based distributor of women's films. Terry Lawler, who was the director of development at Women Make Movies when Dunye's grant application was filed, says Duin called her about a *Premiere* magazine article that covered lesbian filmmakers and mentioned the grant.

"This journalist was pretending to be reporting about something that wasn't happening," says Lawler. "The kind of grant [Dunye] received, an individua artists' grant, does not even exist anymore. Of all the works that were given grants last year, why this one? Because it's inflammatory."

Duin confirms that Dunye's film came to her attention through the *Premiere* piece, but denies she created a story where there wasn't one. "The *Premiere* article made [Dunye's film] sound pretty spicy," Duin says. "And the Philadelphia *City Paper* used the phrase 'hottest dyke sex scene on celluloid.' I thought, 'Geez, didn't we just argue in Congress about this a year ago? Why are we doing this again?'

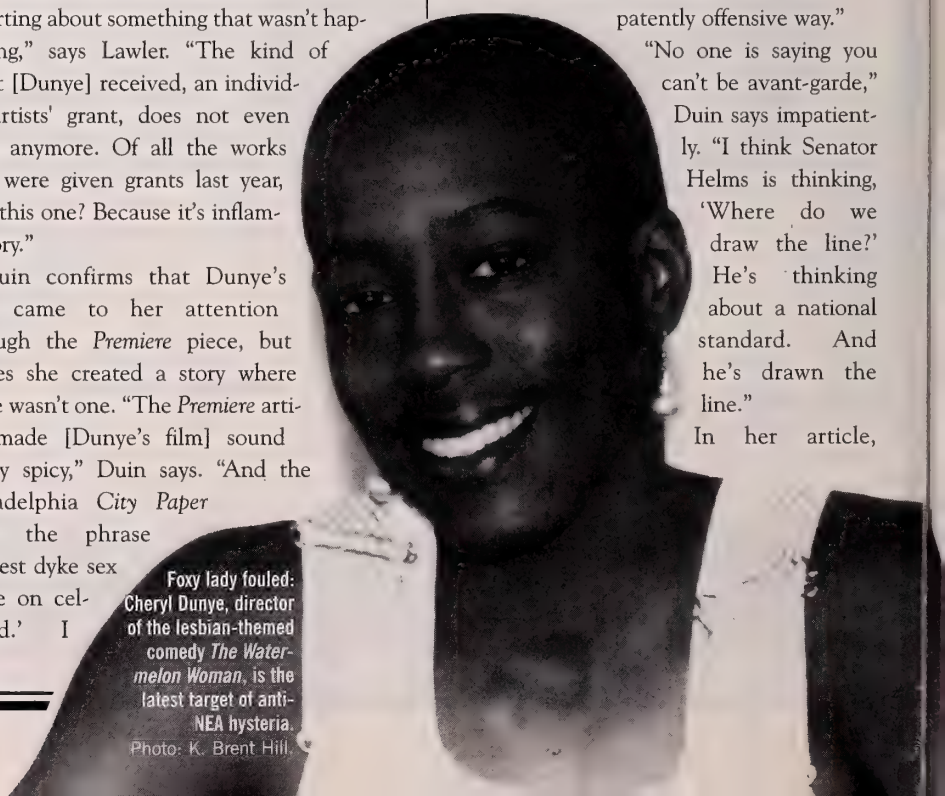
"I think the understanding [NEA Chairwoman] Jane Alexander had made with the Congress was that there wouldn't be any more controversial grants," Duin says. "I think she could have said, 'We need to pull [Dunye's] funding.'"

Lawler, however, points out that individual artist's grants were eliminated by the NEA last year. "You have to remember the last big flap was over *Tongues Untied*," Lawler says. "It's not just picking on gay people, it's picking on gay black people...the most isolated people in the country. The smallest minority with the least kind of support."

Duin concedes some groups that receive NEA funds may be hurt if the agency ceased to exist, but she supports her dismay with Dunye's film by pointing to Sen. Jesse Helms' (R-NC) infamous clause in the 1996 NEA appropriations bill. Among other things, it forbids funding work that denigrates religion or depicts sexual or excretory activities "in a patently offensive way."

"No one is saying you can't be avant-garde," Duin says impatiently. "I think Senator Helms is thinking, 'Where do we draw the line?' He's thinking about a national standard. And he's drawn the line."

In her article,



Foxy lady fouled: Cheryl Dunye, director of the lesbian-themed comedy *The Watermelon Woman*, is the latest target of anti-NEA hysteria. Photo: K. Brent Hill.

Duin quoted black conservative leader Edmund Peterson as saying, "There is no demand in the black community for this movie... If there was a movie about black Christians, it wouldn't get funded." However, like many of the sources quoted in the piece, Peterson had not seen *The Watermelon Woman*.

"It's absurd!" Dunye shouts. "They're responding to a trail of misinformation, elaborating on it, putting on their own information....That's really scary because we'll see this in an election year. Republicans will try to divert attention from what's going on. They don't want to have to debate defense spending or other things that are way out of control. They want to get everybody incensed about this."

The *Washington Times* reporter didn't see the film before writing about it.

In a breach of critical and journalistic protocol, Duin herself didn't see *The Watermelon Woman* before writing about it. While Duin claims that "Cheryl was never able to get me a copy of the film," *The Watermelon Woman* played in New York and Philadelphia within weeks of the article's publication. However, Duin chose not to delay filing the piece in order to attend a screening.

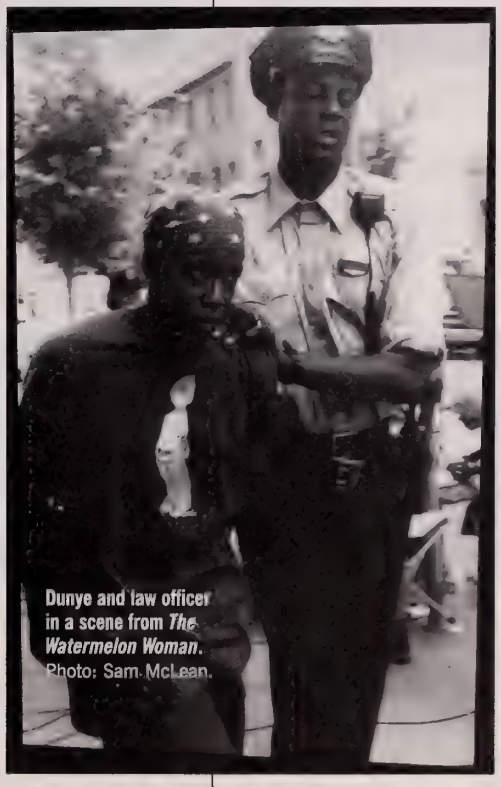
To do so would possibly have precluded the *Times* from publishing the story before the House debated the Interior Appropriations Bill (which contains the NEA's budget) on June 19 and 20. During that debate, Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-MI) offered an amendment to decrease the NEA budget by $31,500, the amount of Dunye's grant.

According to his press secretary, Jon Brandt, Hoekstra saw the *Times* article during a plane ride back to his district. (Neither Brandt nor Duin would say if Duin informed Hoekstra's office about the article before publication.) Hoekstra requested a copy of the film from the NEA, and after viewing it sent out a press release denouncing the film that quoted Duin's article at length and announced his plans to offer the amendment.

"The NEA apparently had at least $31,500 to waste in 1996 to fund this film," the release stated. "The issue here isn't about homosexuality. It's about the NEA's continued insult to the sensibilities of the American people."

Brandt says Hoekstra objected to the "explicit sex" (a 1-1/2 minute love scene) and "drug use" (a 1-minute scene in which two characters smoke marijuana). If it's "not about homosexuality," then what is "insult[ing] the sensibilities of the American people"?

"There is no God-given right to be funded by the NEA," says Brandt sternly. "We're not trying to censor anyone. But this kind of film should not be funded. The federal government's job is to provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and other things the Constitution allows."



Dunye and law officer in a scene from *The Watermelon Woman*. Photo: Sam McLean.

According to the NEA's 1995 Annual Report, the artists and organizations in Hoekstra's home state of Michigan received just over $1.4 million in grants. When asked if Hoekstra realized that defunding the NEA would hurt grant recipients like his district's West Shore Symphony Orchestra in Muskegon, Michigan, Brandt is defensive. "In a different time and place, if we didn't have a trillion-dollar national debt, perhaps we could look at this in a different light."

Dr. Alvin Poussaint of Harvard University sees the attack on Dunye's film from another angle. "People want to [blame] the black community for what's wrong with society, the same way we get singled out as the welfare people, the crime people," says Poussaint. "There is a high degree of suspicion for anything black people do. There are a lot of people in power who are not sympathetic to funding black anything."

In her article, Duin quoted Poussaint as saying: that homosexuality "is not black....It's been foisted on us by the white community." However, Poussaint, who appeared in many of Riggs' documentaries, says took his comments out of context. Furthermore, he wholeheartedly supports Dunye's work.

"I felt at times [Duin] wanted me to say negative things and her questioning was geared to that," says Pouissant. "I told her there are segments of the community that accept [homosexuality], but that there are extreme elements that believe there is no homosexuality in the black community or that there is no room for black homosexuals in the community, I was talking about a broad range of opinion [and] she used the one comment to demonstrate the whole black community felt this way. My position is that this funding is fine. These stories have not been told."

At least one member of Congress was willing to stand up and be counted during Hoekstra's attack. Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) rose to the House floor to eloquently support the NEA.

"I stand in support of the NEA in its broadest sense, in its independence and its recognition of the symphony and the ballet and the independent small arts groups that reach into the minority community," Jackson-Lee said in her speech. "*The Watermelon Woman* was a highly acclaimed film that dealt seriously and realistically with the challenges faced by being a black woman in the entertainment industry...[W]e must consider the fact that the NEA has a long-standing history in reaching to rural America, urban America, and certainly to underserved America."

Dunye maintains that the entire experience represents a call to arms. "Black women aren't going to let this go by. I've hit upon a style of filmmaking that folks aren't sure how to deal with," says Dunye. "Black women are experi-

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"I've contributed to American culture. If there's a problem with that, we've all got a problem." — Cheryl Dunye

encing a rebirth in film and video and we have to speak. We might have been able to function on the margins previously, but now we have to speak up."

NEA spokesperson Cherie Simon believes the public and the press are tiring of the attacks. "We have to stop allowing the agency's critics to define what the agency is," she says. "They don't want the public to know what the NEA does. This is a young, promising filmmaker who's received a number of awards. We have to move beyond this."

After Jackson-Lee's remarks, Hoekstra withdrew his $31,5000 amendment. However, Brandt says the Congressman was asked to do so by House Appropriations chairman Ralph Regula (R-OH), and under a curious rationale. Regula felt that there was an agreement to phase out NEA funding in two years, so any change to the previously agreed-upon budget could open the door to objections that the deal had been broken. But when Regula cited the agreement during debate, Democrats cried foul.

"It's amazing that the majority would invoke an agreement made amongst themselves and expect the minority to support it," said Rep. David Skaggs (D-CO). "It's just a tad presumptuous." Just because the Republicans reached agreement amongst themselves, says Skaggs, "we are not obligated to live by it." According to Regula, however, it was not so much an agreement as a decision by the Republican leadership.

The NEA's legislative authorization, a statute that permits Congress to allocate money to the agency, expired in fiscal year 1993. Under House rules, any request for an appropriation (a designation of federal funds to a program or agency) made without stautory authorization is subject to a point of order. That is, any member can object to the bill, which tables it and effectively prevents its passage.

When Democrats were the majority, their Rules Committee sent NEA appropriations bills to the floor with protections against points of order. But when the Republicans won Congress in 1994, their leaders decided such protection for the NEA's budget could exist only for two years. If that doesn't change next year, the NEA's 1998 budget will enter the appropriations arena unprotected. "Either there has to be an authorization, or the Rules Committee would have to agree to protect NEA appropriations," says Regula. "That's going to be a leadership decision for Mr. Armey and Mr. Gingrich." Regula says he cannot envision a change in the leaders' position at the moment, but that the election could change everything.

And then there's the Senate, which has its own rules. "They could put the money in and we'd have to work it out in conference," Regula allows. "From the conversations I've had, I would expect the Senate to do that."

Indeed, when the bill was marked up by the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 12, Senators Bennett (R-UT), Gorton (R-WA), Cochran (R-MI), and Domenici (R-NM) took the unusual step of stating their support for the NEA. They led the way in eliminating House references to NEA defunding, replacing that language with a statement reading: "The Senate supports continued funding for the NEA, and expects the authorizing issues to be resolved."

The full senate will debate the appropriations bill containing the NEA's budget this fall. For now, it's unknown whether members like Helms will attempt to decrease or abolish the NEA's funding for 1997. (Helms' office did not return repeated calls for comment.)

Dunye believes the true source of the attack lies in making a film that blurs the lines between black lesbians and straight women, and between real history and interpreted history. "What we know as artists is that it's about the gray," says Dunye. "That's what's speaking here. You can be upset at the gray, or be angry at the gray, but the gray has to exist for the black and white to exist.

"Filmmaking is about production of culture," says Dunye. "My piece is about being an American. And I'm an American who got a grant from an American institution and I've contributed to American culture. If there's a problem with that, we've all got a problem."

MARK J. HUISMAN

Mark J. Huisman is a freelance writer in New York City.

National Film Commission May Mean a Political Price

IN THE PAST, STATE FILM COMMISSIONERS FOUND themselves looking on helplessly when production opportunities went to countries happy to guide filmmakers through miles of federal red tape. However, several commissioners propose to change that scenario by creating the nation's first federal film commission, Film US. The benefits of a national film office could include such tantalizing opportunities as production funding, but the initial planning of Film US suggests that the agency could come with a political price tag.

Organizers say the primary goal of Film US would be showing producers federal cooperation instead of intimidation.

"There's this big void when it comes to the federal government," says Film US endorser Chuck Elderd, Palm Beach County film commissioner. "There's no point person on the federal level in this country."

The proposal for Film US comes at a time when the arts and government are increasingly at odds, and skeptics might ask if Film US would only serve as one more layer of federal goo. However, the San Jose Film & Video Commission's Joe O'Kane says that without a central film agency, it's impossible to avoid the bog of bureaucracy. "If a film commissioner has to interface with a federal agency, they essentially have to reinvent the wheel each time unless they already have a relationship from a past filming."

While the definition of Film US is still under development, Stanley Solheim, Wisconsin film commissioner and the acting chair of the group promoting Film US, says he sees the agency as a "film commission for film commissions." Filmmakers would still deal with local offices, but the offices could carry out "one-stop permitting" and save producers time and expense.

Film US also could help alter the nay-saying attitudes that often become an obstacle in portraying federal agencies and departments for film and television. And Ron Ver Kuilen, director of the Illinois Film Office, believes Film US could help soften cities and states leery of granting permits to controversial projects that present negative images. He hopes that authorities will realize that even controversy can be a boon to local economies.

"We don't expect everybody to blindly cave in to every filmmaker's demands," says Ver Kuilen. "We want to have reasonable rules and regulations and get [the state and federal go-

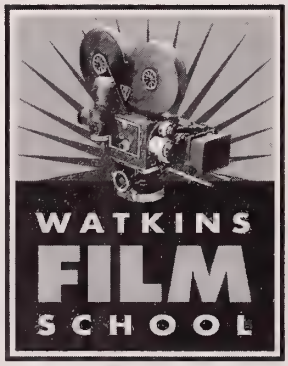
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The Task Force's involvement might suggest ideological censorship.

MEDIA NEWS

ernments] out of the censorship games. I envision Film US as an information and education group to find out who people are at the different federal levels that look favorably upon the film business."

Since the government is more likely to cut an agency than create one, Film US will need a number of movie buffs on their side when it comes to tackling the problem of funding and federal approval. Financing methods have yet to be determined, although Elderd suggests that Film US overhead could be partially covered by the permit fees charged for use of the federal properties.

To gain the government's approval for Film US, its organizers would like to create a partner in the Entertainment Task Force. This group is chaired by Sonny Bono (R-Palm Springs), and his Washington, DC, office describes the group as trying to "get some kind of connection" established between the GOP and Hollywood celebrity activists on issues of "decency" and "morality."

With those political hot buttons at hand, the Task Force's involvement might suggest ideological censorship of projects requiring government cooperation. However, Film US backers hope the Task Force will expand its focus to include entertainment economic policies, and say they'd like to use the Task Force's political connections to attract influential representatives from federal agencies.

Then there's the question of whether Film US could actually provide money to filmmakers. For now, this topic comes with a good deal of dissension among the Film US supporters. "A lot of these countries [that now have federal production funding] are trying to create culture and art as opposed to a commercial venture,"

says O'Kane. "They are not necessarily trying to use those grants to make any kind of money back. Unfortunately, those cultural decisions sometimes overwhelm the business decisions they make." Ver Kuilen worries that the potentially massive expense and responsibilities could easily overwhelm a small agency like Film US.

However, Utah Film Commissioner and Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) president Leigh von der Esch suggests that Film US will discuss financial incentives in light of increasing competition from Canada, South Africa, and eastern Europe. Some American states are also trying to attract productions by providing sales tax rebates and helping filmmakers navigate the process of creating limited partnerships.

U.S. commissions often have different agendas than many of their overseas counterparts, says Karol Martesko, publisher of *Filmmaker* and a producer of Richard Linklater's *Before Sunrise*, which was shot in Vienna with the cooperation of the Austrian Film Commission and the Mayor's film and television office in Vienna.

"[American commissions are] trying to get people to come and make films," says Martesko. "The Austrian and German film commissions are much more interested in representing their filmmakers elsewhere." He adds that Europeans would likely presume that Film US would take American films to other countries for cultural exposure or sales representation rather than act only as a federal government liaison.

Film US supporters plan to seek feedback for the proposal in late September when the AFCI holds its annual symposium in Vancouver. Then, the potential role of Film US will be defined—whether it will be a liaison between local agencies and the feds, a source for production funding, or a networking group for government agencies and commissioners. If the AFCI board votes to move ahead with Film US, the proposal will go before the Entertainment Task Force.

"We recognize the market is global, and there are issues that U.S. film commissions need to deal with," says Solheim. "In our states and cities, we get help from our mayors or governors. There's no one really assisting us at the federal level."

MAX J. ALVAREZ

Max J. Alvarez is a Washington, DC, writer and independent filmmaker.

Apathy Antidote: Teaching Artists To Get Out The Vote

JOANNE CHASNOW CAN MAKE A REGISTERED voter out of you faster than you can think of an excuse, and she wants you to learn how to do the same.

As associate director of Human SERVE, a national nonpartisan voter reform organization, Chasnow usually works to ensure that voter registration cards are available in public places. Her newest mission focuses on helping artists turn other artists into voters.

The battle plan revolves around gallery openings, screenings, and other audience-based performances. The idea is to get registration cards in people's hands, make them fill out the card then and there, and gather the results. Boom, boom, boom: a room full of registered voters.

"Many artists don't participate in politics. Interesting," says Chasnow. "The Christian Coalition is participating in politics. In fact, [Coalition leader] Ralph Reed gets on the television and spends half an hour of his time talking about how the church can be registering people to vote. Instead of putting money in the basket, people drop their completed voter registration forms in the basket."

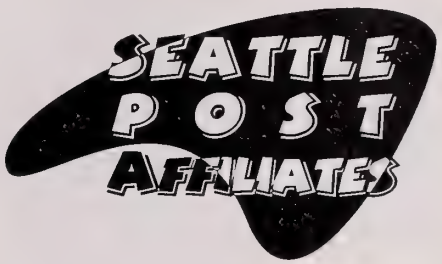
Chasnow's approach also puts a captive audience to use, but she gives her spiel with a combination of Borscht Belt timing and a grade-school teacher's no-nonsense attitude.

"Distribute the registrations with the program," she says. "If there's no program, have someone at the door. At an intermission, have a star or director step out and give a little rap about the importance of voting."

When Chasnow is the registrar, she is the star. At a recent gathering of media and arts organization representatives, she began her registration pitch by saying, "A little project here," as she handed out voter registration forms.

"You now have a voter registration application in front of you," she announced. "I'd like to take a minute and go through it with you to show you how easy it is, and show you how you

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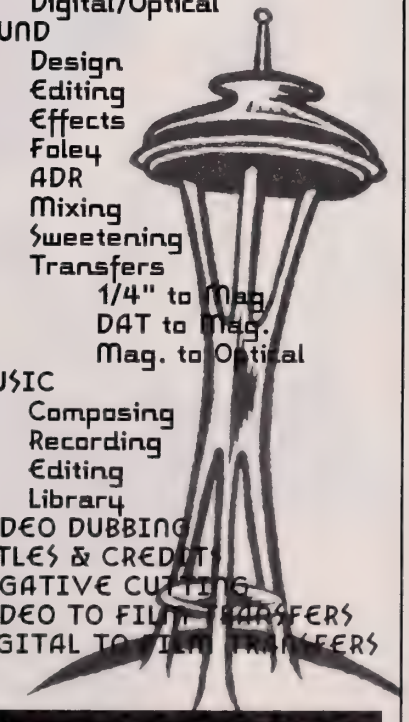
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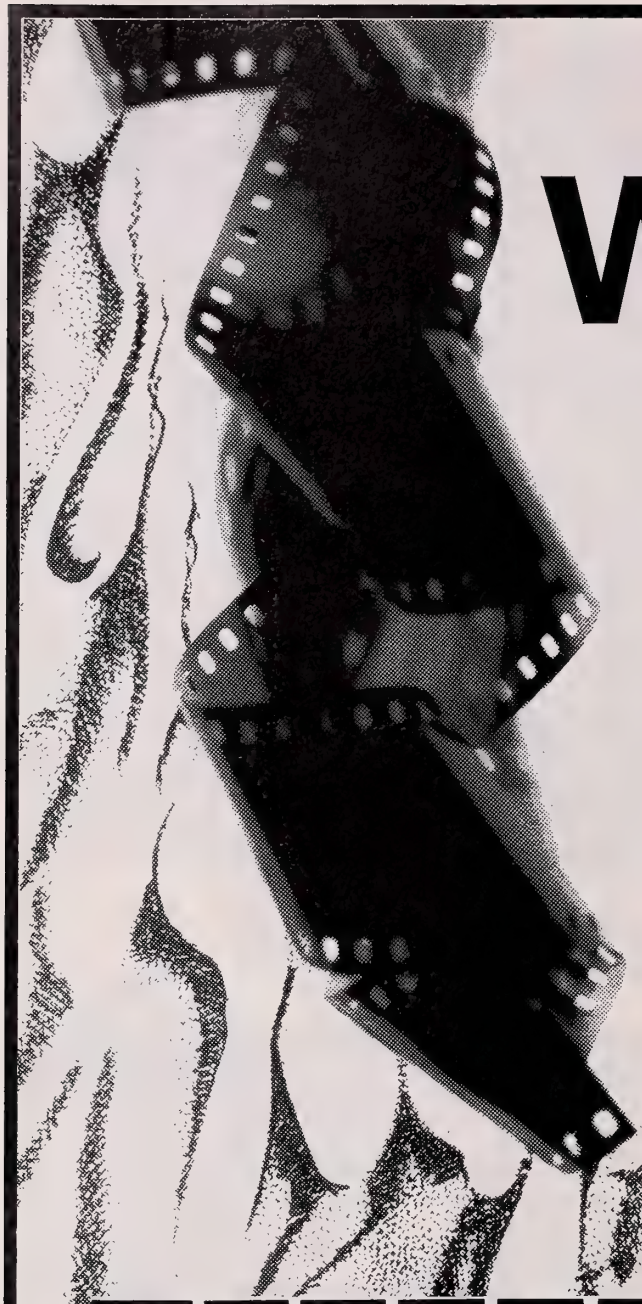
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can register audiences of people to vote whenever you go to a screening of yours, your friend's, a screening of an organization, or a festival."

Chasnow took out a pen. "So, let's start. Please open up the form. It's very complicated," she said puckishly. "It'll take at least a minute. If you're registered to vote, you can rip it up when you get home, and if you're not registered you can mail it in and no one will know that you weren't registered to vote.

"And," she added, reminding her audience that she wants them to become freelance registrars, "you never want to ask your audience if they're registered to vote because people hate to admit they're not."

As pens swayed, Chasnow coached. "Last year you voted, number nine. You don't have to worry about it if you can't remember, it doesn't matter. Your former address, if you remember. Your county, state, if you remember. Number 11, read the affidavit, sign the line, and date it.

"You are now a registered voter," Chasnow said. "And that took..." She looked at her watch. "Well, maybe it took a minute and a half because of the sarcasm I threw in."

It's 90 seconds well spent. Her approach works because she pokes fun at how easy it is to become a voter while reminding you how ridiculous it is not to have done it before. However, as Chasnow is quick to note, she wants more than voters; she wants registrars.

"You don't have to volunteer your Thursday evenings or Saturday mornings to do it," she says. "You don't have to create a coalition." However, she adds that you also can't put voter registration forms in the corner and call it a day.

"You pass them out, you go through it with your audience," she counsels. "You tell your audience how political participation is the only way we are going to save the arts, save child care, save jobs."

Chasnow cautions would-be registrars to remain scrupulously nonpartisan. "If you're not nonpartisan, you have to go through various gyrations of tax forms and contributions. I can't tell you how you should be voting. I can tell you what the facts are."

Finally, if you're still not convinced that your vote is worth the energy it takes to pull the lever, check out *Vote Anyway*, a 3-minute public service announcement produced by the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression. It's designed to remind you of the pleasure in civic duties. To order, call 1-800-477-6233 or email cfe@nwlink.com.

DANA HARRIS

Dana Harris is managing editor of The Independent.

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talking heads

NINA MENKES

director

THE BLOODY CHILD

BY BÉRÉNICE REYNAUD



Nina Menkes
Courtesy filmmaker

EVEN WITHIN THE UNPREDICTABLE LANDSCAPE of American independent cinema, the originality of Nina Menkes' career stands out. In 1981, she made her first film, *Soft Warrior*, about a serious illness suffered by her younger sister, Tinka. When one of her actresses failed to show up, Tinka, refusing to re-enact her sick self, played Nina's role. Since then, Tinka has starred in all her sister's films, and the two have forged what Nina calls a "very unique and very mysterious" collaboration.

The Menkes sisters are a full-blown production team. While Tinka is present at all stages, from conception to editing, Nina credits herself as being "the most independent filmmaker in the world, the best no-budget producer I know, and the only woman alive who shoots her own films in 35." Menkes—who switched from super 8 to 16mm with *The Great Sadness of Zohara* (40 min., 1984) and from 16mm to 35mm with her second feature, *Queen of Diamonds* (1991)—is adamant about the necessity of being her own cinematographer. "I work in a very spontaneous way—without storyboards. The scene actually develops while I am shooting it. So if I had to explain to somebody else what to do, the film itself would be lost... The shooting *is* the filmmaking for me."

Menkes' visuals are characterized by hauntingly beautiful compositions—an arresting mixture of surreal landscapes and quasi-documentary scenes. Her goal is to explore the interior landscape of "the wounded female." As a director, Menkes' "journey" started without theoretical buoys. Only later did she discover a similarity of concerns in such films as Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*, and in feminist film criticism.

With *The Great Sadness of Zohara*, "Tinka became a figure from my unconscious; she represents a lot of the pain that I don't want to deal with," say Nina. In *Zohara* she plays a Jewish woman lost and isolated within the confines of a male-oriented Judaic tradition. In *Magdalena Viraga: Story of a Red Sea Crossing* (1986) she is a stubborn, nasty prostitute wrongly accused of killing a john. She inhabits the dry landscapes of *Queen of Diamonds* as an alienated black jack dealer. And in *The Bloody Child*, she plays an emotionally deadened Marine Captain. This sort of "progression into darkness" eventually took a heavy emotional and physical toll on Tinka, who, since the completion of *The Bloody Child*, has lived as a recluse (and declined to be interviewed).

The Bloody Child's story is based on a newspaper article about a Marine found in the Mojave desert with his wife's murdered body in the back seat of his car. Tinka's Captain is in charge of the unit that finds and holds the murderer. Outwardly, she postures as a cool "macho dude," but deep inside she is damaged and identifies with the victims of American power in the Third World. Some 16mm footage shot in Egypt and Sudan that the sisters had shelved years ago provides a surreal metaphor for her character's psyche.

The Menkes sisters cast active Marines for the parts of the enlisted men, including Robert Mueller, who plays the murderer and is now pursuing an acting career, and Russ Little, found through an open call on radio, who served as actor, AD, and adviser on military matters. To organize the footage, Tinka suggested that the arrest of the Marine be edited backwards. That long scene is intercut with two other strands: the African footage and some documentary-like scenes of Marine R&R—drinking, playing pool, having conversations in bed.

Another counterpoint is created by two obsessively repeated elements: the arresting sergeant thrusting the murderer's head into the bloody corpse of his wife, screaming in disgust; and a graceful black stallion appearing against the desert sky. "I didn't know how the horse would work, but I emotionally needed it," the director explains. "The energy, the power of this beautiful animal provides the only moment in the film where you're not locked in claustrophobic violence."

Menkes was awarded a $30,000 Guggenheim fellowship, which she used to shoot the film and put together a 10-minute sample reel. Later she received NEA and American Film Institute grants, plus $75,000 in completion funds from ITVS. The film cost $150,000, but Menkes got everything she could for free.

After locking the picture, the sisters spent a whole year editing sound. "We had 15 tracks," explains Menkes, "which is not a lot for a feature film, but sometimes there were five or seven voiceover tracks running together, which is quite complicated. At first, I wanted the voiceover to be that of Tinka's character. Finally we thought the murdered woman should control the space, the energy, and the narrative, while one of the essential aspects of Tinka's character is that she has

been reduced to muteness, she has no voice."

Premiering at Sundance last winter, showcased in a special program in Locarno, and opening theatrically this month in Los Angeles, *The Bloody Child* is, according to Menkes, her most accessible film. "There is a softening of the defense structure on my part," she says. "What Tinka calls my projection into her has started to break down, and that provides a form of opening."

She continues, "Tinka represents a part of myself that is really wounded and powerless. I now want to grow out of that universe of pain. I hope my next film will be a beautiful, happy film."

The Bloody Child, c/o Nina Menkes, Menkesfilm, 8996 Keith Ave., West Hollywood, CA 90069; phone/fax (310) 271-3647.

Bérénice Reynaud is a U.S. correspondent for Cahiers du Cinema *and teachers at the California Institute for the Arts.*

PHILLIP B. ROTH

film diarist

I WAS A JEWISH SEX WORKER

BY JERRY WHITE

PHILLIP B. ROTH'S PERSONAL DIARY FILM *I WAS a Jewish Sex Worker* certainly has one of the splashiest titles around. It also has its share of on-screen sex. (Roth makes no apologies that his film is "meant to be voyeuristic.") But its low-key diary style makes it less sensationalistic than it sounds, and Roth's concerns as a filmmaker extend beyond sex into subjects like family, spirituality, and survival in the urban jungle.

I Was a Jewish Sex Worker depicts a year in Roth's life when he switched from temp work to sex work in an attempt to support his filmmaking habit and survive in New York. It opens with a comical combination of messages on Roth's answering machine: there are messages from members of his family, from middle-aged men responding to his "sensual massage" ad in the *New York Press*, and from a college student telling him that "*Goodbye Columbus* changed my life, man." (Roth is no relation to the novelist.) This opening concisely sets up the two different worlds Roth then inhabited, one populated by his middle-class, midtown Manhattan family, and the other by clients whom he serviced out of his Lower East Side apartment.

"I had accumulated a lot of footage of my family," says Roth, 32, about the genesis of the film. "I was feeling a breach between my family life and my life outside." The documentary represents his effort to rejoin them in some way.

In addition to family members, Roth also brings in other key players from his biography, including two mediamakers who have also made a show of their sex lives, Rosa von Praunheim and Annie Sprinkle. After earning a B.A. in film studies from UC-Berkeley and some recognition in the indie film world with his short *Boys/Life* (1989), Roth spent time living in Paris , where he studied at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, and in Berlin, where he decided to call up veteran director and gay activist-provocateur von Praunheim, whose films he admired. This led to a doomed love affair; some footage of the couple arguing in bed is included in *I Was a Jewish Sex Worker*. (Roth is in a sense returning the favor; he shows up in what is "less than a cameo" in von Praunheim's *Affengeil*.)

Roth met performance artist and former sex worker Annie Sprinkle at a "rebirthing" workshop she gave in New York, intended to help participants "reexperience your birth trauma." Like Roth, Sprinkle is interested in how sex and spirituality intertwine. But the two have something else in common. Sprinkle appeared in Roth's film *25 Year Old Gay Man Loses Virginity to a Woman* (1991), in which she gives him his first, and only, heterosexual experience. (This, too, is excerpted in his latest film.)

For Roth, sex and religion have a remarkable commonality. "I was using sex to fill up a sense



Phillip B. Roth and clone.
Courtesy filmmaker

of emptiness," he says. "That's what people often use religion for, to answer the unanswerable." Though raised in a religious family, Roth drifted from organized religion. In the film he notes that sex had become more spiritual than religion, but it's an assessment he now questions. "Sex answers questions more readily," he says, "but less deeply."

The experience of making *I Was a Jewish Sex Worker* has taught Roth a thing or two about how to raise money. "I got a grant from Mastercard," he quips. The rest came from family and friends, capped off by a completion grant of $2,000 from the San Francisco-based media center Frameline. His budget was around $20,000; he's devoting about $5,000 of this to distribution and marketing.

The film is currently finding some success on the festival circuit. Since its world premiere at the Montreal Festival of New Cinema in June, *I Was a Jewish Sex Worker* has played at the gay and lesbian film festivals in San Francisco and Los Angeles and gotten a review in *Variety*. Jewish film festivals have recently begun showing interest (the film screens November 9 at the Jewish Film Festival in Los Angeles), so Roth is hopeful about the film's crossover potential. He believes the film should be able to gain a wider reception than is usually reserved for personal documentaries about life on the fringe.

But because the film documents his sex work in such explicit detail (he includes shots of some hand jobs), it's a hard sell for even the most independent distributors. "They like it, but won't touch it," says Roth of the companies with whom he's had preliminary discussions. He also points out, however, that the sexual content is not the only problem; the film diary form is also an obstacle. "Because the style is so personal, marketing is tough," he says.

Roth has begun to make bookings directly (including one next April at the Laemmle Sunset 5 in Los Angeles, a city that a potential distributor would certainly want to cash in on). "I'm not wild about the idea of self-distribution," he admits, "but if I have to...."

Despite his forays into documentary and experimental film, Roth considers himself more inclined towards narrative. "I wound up giving [*I Was a Jewish Sex Worker*] a narrative structure," he says. This latest work also taught him that what drives him as a filmmaker is the portrayal of the quirks of his own life.

"In doing this film," he says, "I realized my own style. Now I'm trying to apply that to a fictional narrative." Not surprisingly, there's sex here, too. Roth describes his screenplay-in-progress as "a Jewish s/m screwball comedy."

I Was a Jewish Sex Worker, c/o Phillip Roth, 130 W. Houston, New York NY 10012-2512; (212) 388-9223; fax: 982-2642.

Jerry White is a graduate student in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta, where he also teaches film studies.

TALKING HEADS

STEFAN GERARD & PAUL GACHOT

festival directors

GENART FILM FESTIVAL

BY DANA HARRIS

BOOK EDITOR STEFAN GERARD BECAME AN exhibitor when he and his friends decided that Manhattan galleries were missing the work they wanted to see. Four years later, Gerard, 26, is the executive director of GenArt, a national nonprofit organization based in New York that champions new artists through exhibits, fashion shows, and most recently, a film festival.

GenArt doesn't look or act like many nonprofits. Weeks prior to the 1996 film festival (held April 7-May 3), glossy posters all over New York promoted the week-long event with the call: "Seven Films. Seven Parties." On the festival's opening night, the audience turned Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall into a madhouse for a screening of Brad Anderson's *The Darien Gap*. At the party that followed, free drinks flowed courtesy of Absolut Vodka.

As much as its promise of good art, GenArt's promise of a good time attracted a young audience that reached well beyond the usual festival circuit veterans.

"We had no idea that [GenArt] would grow to its scope," says Gerard. "There were artists who weren't getting the kind of exposure that we felt they deserved, and we clearly recognized the ability to draw people to a location if you have the right kind of lures. We decided to create an opportunity for that energy to percolate."

Last August, when Gerard's friend (and GenArt volunteer) Paul Gachot, 28, wanted to move from film production to film festival production, GenArt seemed the ideal place to do it. First on the agenda was building a festival advisory board that included directors Wayne Wang and Ed Burns.

"It wound up being a pretty easy sell," says Gachot. "Some people were willing to talk to the press, other people tracked down films or made industry connections. And those people who lent their names were very helpful for establishing credibility."



To find films fast, Gachot and director of programming Graham Leggat put up posters, called state film commissions, producers, and those Gachot calls "the John Piersons and people like that." There were no entry fees.

Finally, Gachot, Leggat, and their selection committee narrowed the field of 400 films down to seven. Those selected included Robert Patton-Spruill's *Squeeze*, Francis von Zerneck's *God's Lonely Man*, and John O'Brien's *Man with a Plan*.

Unlike most film festivals, GenArt screened one film per night. Each screening was followed by the "ViewFinder Program," which combined the time-honored practice of an after-party with an event produced by the filmmaker that cast some light on their filmmaking process.

The ViewFinder events were held throughout New York City at clubs chosen with the mood of the evening's film in mind. The results were sometimes surreal: At the reception for Steven Bognar's documentary *Personal Belongings*, a slide show flashed larger-than-life photos of his Hungarian immi-

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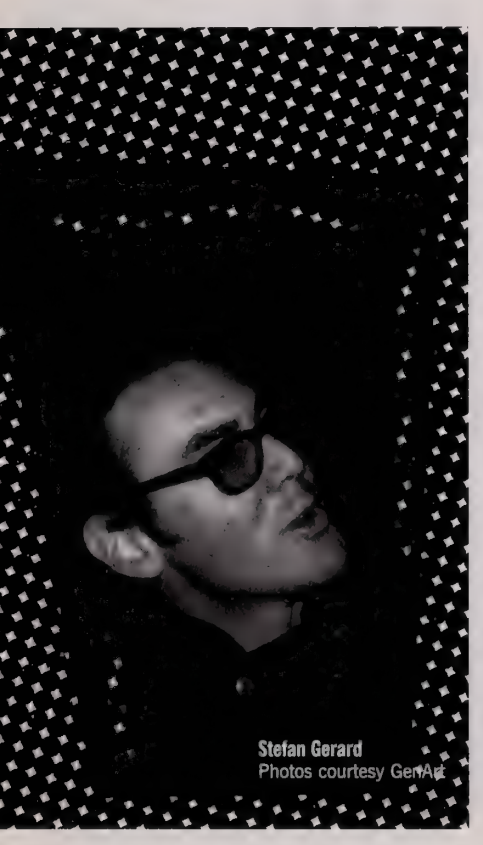
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grant father on the wall of the dark and trendy Bar 21 as Evelyn Blakey's bluesy jazz ensemble band played.

However, Gerard says that equal parts art film and arty party ensured that the festival reached the lay person as well as the established film community. "When you get an audience that's fresh, it's very exciting, and that energy is something we wouldn't want to lose."



Stefan Gerard
Photos courtesy GenArt

By targeting an audience who, as Gerard says, "didn't usually go to galleries," GenArt tapped into the 35-and-under crowd that makes demographic gurus whimper. GenArt uses that trump card to good advantage. Rather than develop heat-seeking grant missiles, they court the nonprofit boogey man of corporate sponsorship.

"We started in a time of no funding and accepted that as part of our operating mechanism," says Gerard. "We try to target companies that are interested in the audience GenArt represents and whose aesthetic is in keeping with what we're about."

However, Gerard adds that sponsorship has never affected the content of a GenArt event. Film festival sponsors such as Ralph Lauren and Absolut Vodka were interested in commerce, not censorship.

"They wanted to know the agenda, but there was never any discussion about 'Why are you showing this film?' or even asking to see the films," says Gerard. "They wanted to know about the methodology, how we were presenting it, the professionalism—all of which are very legitimate questions if you're investing or donating your money."

That cash flow helped make GenArt look like an established festival in its rookie year. The oversized film program was printed on heavy stock, and each film and ViewFinder event had its own unique invitation.

The opportunity for high-quality exposure at the entry level proved irresistible to many volunteers. "If every person had to be salaried who was working on [the festival], the budget would have been in the millions." says Gerard, who is the only full-time employee in GenArt's New York office. "Publicists, designers, advertisers—everyone had their opportunity to make their mark, and it showed."

This appeal has had far-reaching effects. GenArt now has offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New Mexico. While these branches are largely focused on fine art (although the L.A. office also dabbles in music), Gerard says each began by someone wanting to duplicate at home what GenArt was doing in New York.

"We've outlined a methodology that's very effective and reproducible in other locations," says Gerard. "GenArt becomes a conduit through which people's resources and talents are directed toward one common goal."

For now, GenArt is planning a few more exhibitions to round out the year and is already accepting submissions for next year's film festival. "I would like to see it be a two-week festival, but we'll stick to one filmmaker per day," says Gachot.

However, Gerard adds that GenArt serves people far beyond its programming. "We work here all the time," he says. "I get all sorts of questions. People who want to start their own festival, people who have questions about nonprofits, who don't know anything about the gallery systems, producers who want to know how we got so much press.

"We've gotten very good at helping people to promote their work, gain exposure, and collaborate," Gerard says. "Our interests are created through the people."

Next year's festival date hasn't been decided, but you can submit entries now. The address is: GenArt, Attn: GenArt Film, 1435 W. 28th St., Suite 11C, NY NY 10001; (212) 290-0312; http://www.genart.org.

Dana Harris is the managing editor of The Independent.

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field reports

INPUT makes it to Mexico

After 19 years, public TV's top conference lands on Latin American soil.

BY RAY SANTISTEBAN

MARIACHI BANDS, TRADITIONAL MEXICAN dancers, and unlimited shots of tequila welcomed delegates to the 19th edition of the International Public Television (INPUT) conference, held May 26 to June 1 in Guadalajara, Mexico. This year's site is particularly noteworthy, as it marks the first time INPUT has been located in a Latin American country.

Founded in 1977, INPUT began as a way of bringing together public broadcasting personnel and producers from around the world to screen and discuss some of the most innovative and controversial work created for public television. Since then, it has grown in size and stature. This year hundreds of delegates attended the weeklong event, which presented some 120 public television programs from 38 countries.

INPUT serves a valuable function, providing an open atmosphere for filmmakers to garner criticism and praise from their peers. Since the conference has a reputation for screening controversial work and encourages viewer feedback, the discussions are frequently spirited and sometimes heated. With only two INPUTs under my belt, I have seen debates that have left filmmakers shaken and others in tears. (Simultaneous translations are provided, so you don't miss a word.)

Issiako Konate, a filmmaker from Burkina Faso, believes INPUT helps open cultural boundaries between countries. "This was my first INPUT," he says. "I saw many films and got a lot of ideas. I feel it's important to have an international link—to exchange ideas through the work, to see different people, civilizations, and mentalities."

INPUT also allows attendees to measure how their countries' programs stack up against the rest of the world's. As a North American, you hear constant references to our penchant for producing "fast paced" documentaries. You also begin to see how foreigners view the state of our public broadcasting system. When asked about the recent attacks on PBS, Sergio Borelli, INPUT co-founder and former executive at Radio-Television Italiano, seemed unconcerned. "For such a long time, people have been talking about a crisis in public television in the United States," he said. "It seems to me that public television in the United States has always been in crisis, with few exceptions."



Watermelon, mangoes, and public television awaited delegates at the Guadalajara INPUT. Here, Los Angeles producer Joe Rodriguez samples the goods.
Photos: Ray Santisteban

Global contacts

People attend INPUT for different reasons. For some, it's part of their job as station administrators, series staff, or funding representatives. Others come for artistic rejuvenation, knowing that innovative visual techniques and story structures are standard fare at INPUT.

Independent producers often come hoping to make international sales. Their productions are allowed into the conference screenings alongside station-produced programming (all entries must be intended for broadcast on public TV).

Though the door is open to independents, the admissions process is a complicated one. Anyone can submit films to their country's national coordinator; in the U.S. it's Sandie Pedlow from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. After an initial weeding-out process by a national panel (which in this country comprises 21 station reps, CPB staff, and other media types), the selection goes to an international committee of shop stewards, who meet in Italy to choose the final line-up. These shop stewards later introduce the programs and moderate post-screening discussions during the conference.

There's another compelling reasons for independent producers to go to INPUT, and that is to make international contacts in an increasingly global coproduction environment. Such contacts are easy to make here, this being one of the most relaxed conference

environments. Although business is frequently discussed, it's certainly not in the forefront.

"INPUT is pretty informal, so you can talk to people who are important without there being this huge division between you," says San Francisco-based producer Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, who was there with her work-in-progress, *Paulina*, a nonfiction feature about the difficult life of an independent Mexican woman in a patriarchal Latin American society. *Paulina* was not in the official line-up, but Taylor and director Vicky Funari managed to set up a screening in "The Independents Room," a new space reserved for such informal, ad hoc presentations. Her audience consisted of representatives from Mexican public television, who had previously expressed interest in a possible broadcast.

Marisa Leal, an INPUT shop steward and director of programming for the Los Angeles-based National Latino Communications Center (NLCC), observes that INPUT is slowly becoming more business-oriented: "INPUT has never been set up as a market, but it has started to become a market within the last three years," she says. "But it's always been a very underground type of thing, very hush-hush."

While INPUT provides an ideal opportunity to make foreign contacts, many U.S. independents also find it an opportune way to meet public broadcasting players from our own country. This year was no exception, as Ellen Schneider (*P.O.V.*), Sandra Pedlow (director of arts and culture for CPB), David Liu (ITVS), and Susan Lacy (*American Masters*) were in attendance.

In general, however, fewer public television reps showed up this year, possibly due to cutbacks in travel budgets and stations prioritizing MIP, MIPCOM, and major film festivals like Sundance and Toronto over INPUT. None of the major U.S. producing stations sent staff this year, and CBP and PBS sent less than a handful combined. Similarly, fewer attended from Britain's BBC and Channel Four, among other foreign buyers.

The NLCC contingent

Helming this year's conference was Margarita Sierra, a charming, stylish, and energizing woman who seems to be in perpetual motion. It was largely due to her lobbying that INPUT was finally brought to Latin America. (Typically, the conference alternates between Europe and the United States.)

According to Sierra and her staff, bringing INPUT to Mexico was no easy task, largely due

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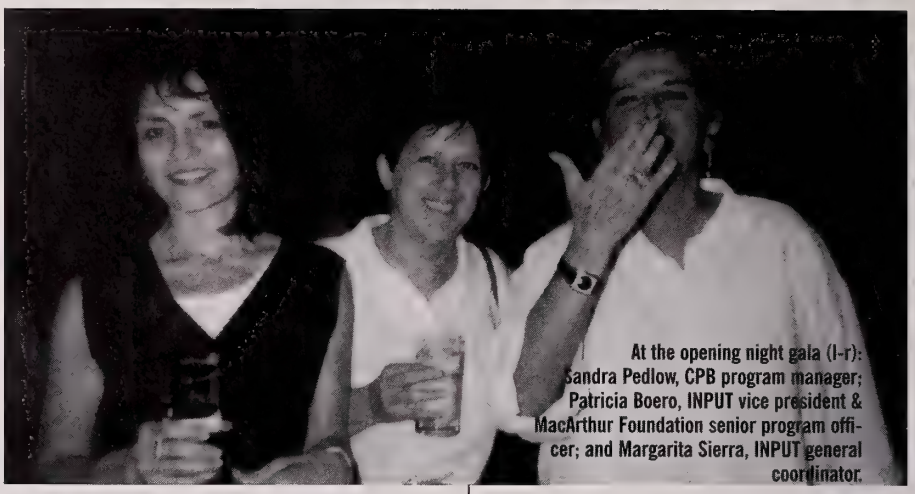
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At the opening night gala (l-r): Sandra Pedlow, CPB program manager; Patricia Boero, INPUT vice president & MacArthur Foundation senior program officer; and Margarita Sierra, INPUT general coordinator.

to misconceptions about Mexico and its people. "It was very difficult to get INPUT here," one staff member commented. "Many people thought we were still wearing sombreros and carrying pistolas."

These preconceptions about Latin America filtered into the conference. As it proceeded without a hitch, numerous compliments seemed grounded on negative expectations. Taylor was troubled by these awkward displays. "It was run perfectly well. I actually thought it was really offensive that so many people were astonished that [INPUT] could happen in Mexico," she says. "There was a patronizing tone from people who couldn't believe something could work there."

But work it did, especially in terms of acting as a networking hub for Latin American and U.S. Latino producers.

Overall, Latin America had 313 delegates; in addition, a large number of students from the University of Guadalajara (one of the conference sponsors) continuously filtered in and out. (The number of programs from Mexican public TV remained relatively small, however, reflecting its lesser funding and production levels.)

In an unprecedented move, the National Latino Communications Center sponsored a 14-person delegation of independent Latino producers from the U.S. (including this writer). In many ways this group represented a condensed version of the history of Chicano/Latino filmmaking in this country. The delegation included documentary trail-blazers Jesus Trevino (director of *Yo Soy Chicano*, the first nationally broadcast Chicano film) and Helena Solberg (the Brazilian-born director, whose latest work is the experimental bio-pic *Carmen Miranda: Bananas Is My Business*), video artist Edin Velez, as well as relative newcomers like Natacha Estebanez (former executive producer of WGBH's *La Plaza* series) and Sandra Guardado (an independent producer from Austin).

For the NLCC, Mexico's proximity allowed a relatively inexpensive way to make Latin American contacts. "Being that INPUT was in Mexico, there was a concentration of Latin Americans and their programing, which would provide our group the opportunity to network, talk about coproductions, or at least see each others' work," Leal explained. Many in our delegation held a certain advantage over other INPUT attendees in that we had a command of the Spanish language, knowledge of the culture, and, in one case, relatives on the outskirts of town who volunteered to feed us and let us ride their horses, which we gladly did on our one free afternoon.

In addition to the informal networking, the conference organizers set up several meetings that allowed U.S. Latinos and their Latin American counterparts to meet with Mexican station representatives. While previously a rarity, there appears to be growing interest in U.S. Chicano/Latino productions airing in Mexico. For instance, Dallas-Ft. Worth affiliate KERA's three-part series *The U.S.-Mexican War: 1846-1848*, produced in collaboration with Chicano filmmaker Paul Espinosa, is scheduled to air in Mexico in the same week as its 1997 U.S. broadcast.

On the American side, the NLCC was interested in bringing Latin American productions to the U.S. They found two from Brazil and one from Mexico, which they plan to subtitle and present on Los Angeles affiliate KCET and possibly other PBS stations.

Fiesta time

As an INPUT site, Guadalajara provided an excellent location for eating, sightseeing, and gift-buying. The days were warm, the nights

pleasant and breezy. Dollars go a long way in Mexico, allowing for cost-conscious independents to spend a little and get a lot.

Despite the allure of Guadalajara, many attendees stuck it out in screenings and meetings until sundown, when the scheduled program ended. But the night was all our own.

I spent one memorable evening with conference delegates at a local restaurant called El Cubilete, which featured a charismatic, Afro-Cuban woman singer. The drinks kept on coming, and before long, NLCC delegate Joe Rodriguez was singing *rancheros* and Donald Marbury, director of CPB's program fund, sang several songs which he graciously dedicated to the conference participants. (Thankfully, both were fine singers.) Later, the band switched gears, and we danced the night away.

Whatever the initial apprehensions, INPUT '96 was deemed a success, judging from word of mouth, sentiments expressed at the final conference meeting, and the results of a questionnaire passed out as the proceedings wound down.

According to Patricia Boero, vice president of INPUT and a senior program officer at the MacArthur Foundation (which upped its support for INPUT to $50,000 this year), the Guadalajara INPUT was an important landmark in the history of the conference not only for its location, but also because of its funding strategy. INPUT is an unusual institution in that, despite its size and visibility, it is not an incorporated body and relies on volunteer workers to oversee its complicated logistics. Moreover, INPUT lacks a fixed financing system and relies largely on its rotating host country to find a means of support.

"I really must praise [conference coordinator] Margarita Sierra," Boero says. "Her strategy of forming a coalition of 12 different institutions that included several universities in Mexico and smaller provincial stations far from the city centers really paid off... They hit on one of the keys to the future of public television, which is this strategic building of partnerships between a station and other community-based organizations."

The Guadalajara INPUT may signal a new direction for this conference, long dominated by Europe and the United States. Some talked about Africa being a possible future site; others spoke of the possibility of a joint Chicano/Mexican INPUT to be held in a border city, possibly Tijuana. I can't wait.

Ray Santisteban (rsantist@facstaff.wisc.edu) is a visiting lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he teaches a course in Chicano cinema.

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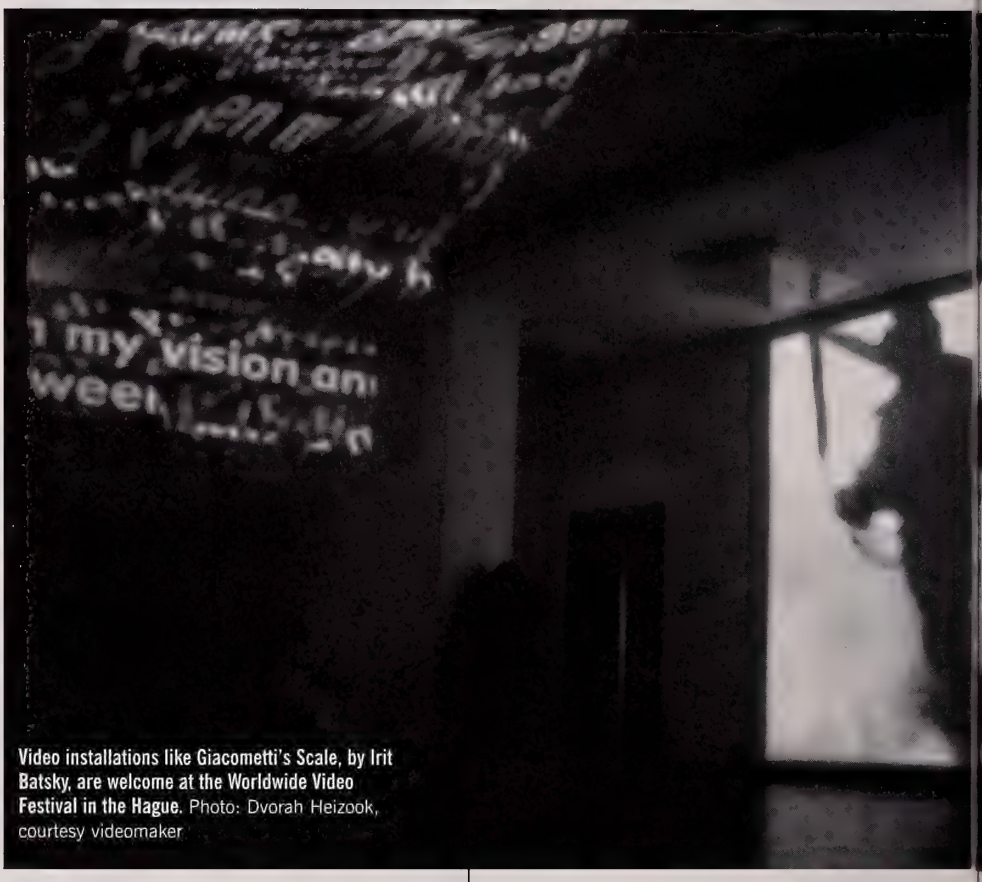
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field reports

It's a Small

The World Wide Video Festival

BY CARA MERTES



Video installations like Giacometti's Scale, by Irit Batsky, are welcome at the Worldwide Video Festival in the Hague. Photo: Dvorah Heizook, courtesy videomaker

THERE IS AN ORIGIN MYTH about video art that goes something like this: In the beginning, Nam June Paik shot a spur-of-the-moment video of Pope Paul VI's 1965 visit to New York using a Portapak, then fresh on the market, and screened it that very night at the Cafe a Go-Go. A new art form was born, double-blessed by video's anointed prophet and no less than a representative of God on Earth.

Video nevertheless had come into the world a bastard child of cinema and fifties television: rough-edged, clumsy, and so immediate it took your breath away. But for some, it became the quintessential postmodern art form.

Recognizing that video was a medium worthy of its own festival, Tom van Vliet and a group of video enthusiasts organized the first international showcase strictly for video in 1982: The World Wide Video Festival, held in The Hague, the friendly, almost serene political center of The Netherlands located 20 minutes by train from its more free-spirited sibling, Amsterdam.

Fourteen years later, van Vliet still curates the programming and does the fundraising. The 1996 edition, held April 26-30, continued the tradition of reflecting a van Vliet guide to the video art world. The absence of any other curatorial input limits the programming, and while this kind of "small" is not necessarily bad, a name like The World Wide Video Festival, conjures up certain expectations. Suffice it to say the festival has traditionally had a hard time living up to its name, but the organizers have seen no reason to change it.

For the first few years, van Vliet and then co-programmer Albert Wufflers described their personal selection criteria with words like "willfulness," "conviction," and "inevitability." Now there are no rationales for the subjective nature of the curating, though the catalogue's apology for the scant representation of anything from Central and South America, Asia, and the Pacific Rim is a little threadbare, especially considering the growing body of work being produced in these regions. This year, the festival included only one work from India, Uruguay, Chile, and Algeria respectively, and four from Brazil. Sporadic attempts have been made to widen the international scope, with limited success. Next year, however, the festival hopes to provide production workshops in Asia, India, and Africa as a result of a new strand of funding.

Despite these limitations, the festival is one of the largest and oldest annual gatherings dedicated solely to video. This year saw the presentation of 85 videotapes, 11 installations, 10 CD-ROMs, and 11 Web sites. While the programming continued to reflect the more individualistic, self-referential impulses historically expressed in video, the overtly political and collectively based video tradition found in the early years of the festival took a distant back seat.

Video producers' fascination with time, space, and the body was well represented. Among the U.S. tapes in the more poetic vein, Seoungho Cho's haunting *Forward, Back, Side, Forward Again*, Ed Rankus' meditative *Nerve Language*, and Jenny Lion and Steve Matheson's elegant *The Sky and Its Exacting Protocol* explore the relationship of

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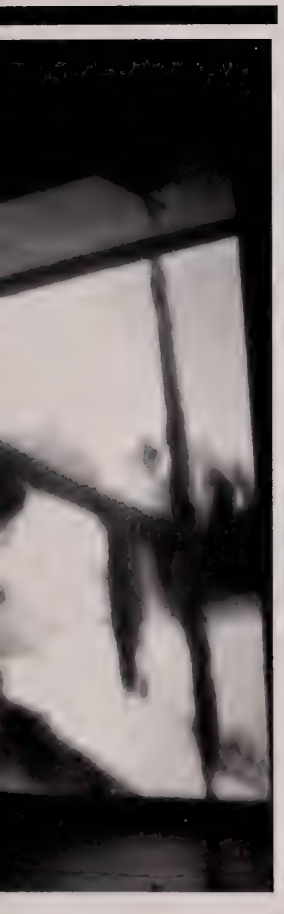


image and narrative, metaphor and fact. The most ambitious of such works was Brazilian Eder Santos' visually and musically stunning piece *Endredo as pessoas* (*Confusing the People*). Seeming to operate almost completely on the level of the unconscious, this video feature runs 71 minutes and takes the form of a travelogue that seems to extend to heaven, hell, and somewhere outside of time.

Language as text, serving as poetry, information, interruption, and political agitation, appears in Kristine Diekman and Tony Allard's *Corpse and Mirror*, Tony Cokes' *No Sell Out!*, and Norman Cowie's *The Third Wave*. Dan Boord and Luis Valdovino's wry faux-diary *Patagonia* searches for answers to a lingering identity crisis.

The installations included works by Beth B., Irit Batsry, Eder Santos, Gary Hill, and Nan Hoover. Beth B.'s powerful exploration of institutional power and individual suffering, *Under Lock and Key*, was one of the larger pieces. Batsry's meticulous and mesmerizing *Giacometti's Scale* continues her long-term work with perception, language, and experience. Though there seemed to be no central theme for the installation choices, the sampling was enough

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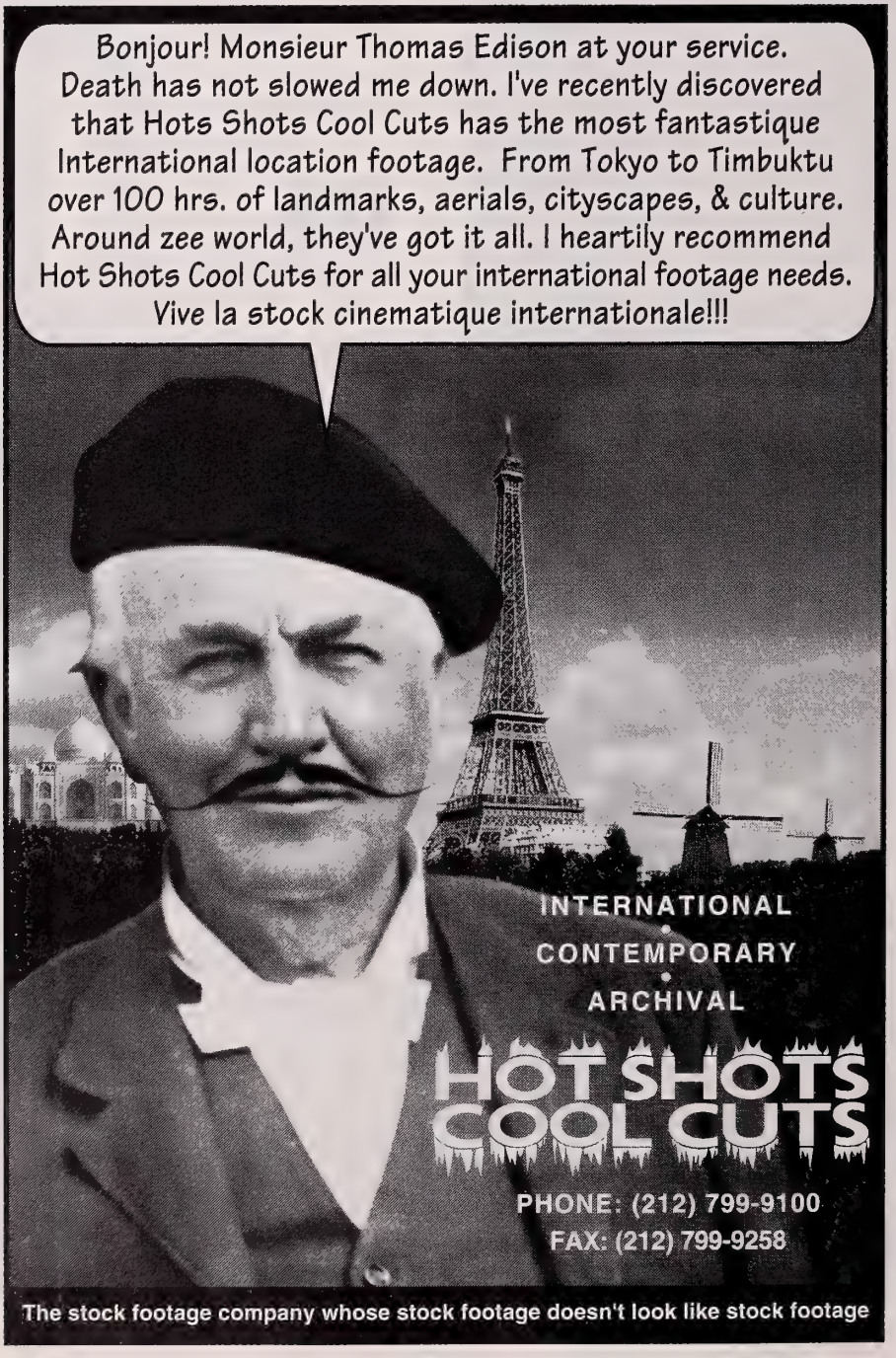
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to intrigue.

A selection of Internet sites and CD-ROMs was included for the first time, as many video artists have started working in new media. Some sites can still be visited. One worth noting for independent film aficionados is Scott Stark's http://www.sirius.com/~sstark/beyond. Zoe Beloff's entrancing serial films, which were included in the festival, run on this site.

While the World Wide Video Festival may be the longest-running video festival in Europe, today it is neither the largest video gathering, nor the best attended. New media festivals and established film festivals with video sidebars draw larger crowds these days, in both Europe and the U.S. The days when it was *the* place (and the only place) to premiere video are gone.

In conversation, van Vliet says he remains convinced of the importance of a forum for video and new media that is separate from a film festival context. The critical question is: How does video relate to new media, and how will that relationship change funding patterns for video art?

Festivals as well as artists are struggling with the re-mapping of video's terrain. As always, some of the primary cartographers of video's landscape are funders, and many now include new media in the same category as video work. As long-time video artist Irit Batsry puts it, "Before, whenever a government agency or private company wanted to sponsor an event and be associated with 'the art of the future,' video art provided that. Now it has to be a new technology. On the one hand, that is positive because it has taken the 'fashionable' focus off of video art, and people can now concentrate on their work, but it is bad because it is harder to get funding."

Despite the limitations, showing a work at the World Wide Festival is a "rite of passage," in the words of one videomaker, and many videos have since been invited to other festivals as a result. The World Wide Festival continues to offer rich programming, an invaluable catalog, and an established venue for catching up on some of the doings in the video world. Even with the attractions of cyberspace, nothing replaces meeting people in person, having a drink, and spinning new video mythologies.

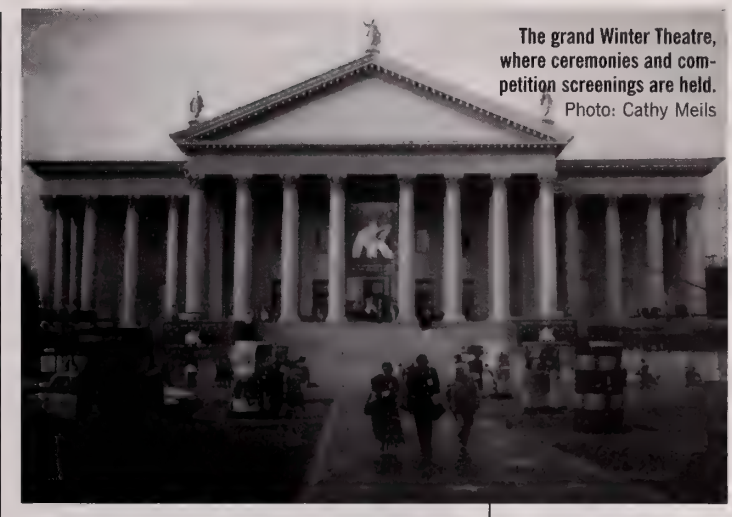
Cara Mertes is a producer, programmer, and consultant based in New York. She is a producer for the public television series New Television *and the producer/director of the ITVS series* Signal to Noise: Life with Television, *recently broadcast on PBS.*

From Russia With Love

The Sochi Film Festival

field reports

BY CATHY MEILS



The grand Winter Theatre, where ceremonies and competition screenings are held. Photo: Cathy Meils

IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT IN A BIG COUNTRY, things happen in a big way. And so, at the Sochi Film Festival, held July 1-13 in the Russian Black Sea resort town, there were big names (Gerard Depardieu), big hopes (turning Sochi into the Russian Cannes), and big fiascoes (in spite of big bucks spent on two chartered planeloads of French holiday makers, it just wasn't Cannes). Even the festival itself isn't content with being just one festival; the seven-year-old Open Russian Film Festival, a survey of the country's annual production, was joined three years ago by the International Film Festival.

That's just as well, for while the Russian competition section proved more interesting than its international counterpart, there is a dwindling supply of Russian films to choose from. Film production has been dropping by about 50 percent annually for the past five years. Last year fewer than 50 films were produced. 1996 should produce no more than 30—quite a change from the glory days (at least in terms of output) of the eighties, when numbers approached the 1,000 mark.

The problem lies with the film industry's reliance on government money. When that dried up in the spring of this year as the Russian elections drew near, local film production stopped completely even at such major studios as St. Petersburg's Lenfilm. One enterprising director/producer has started a Web site aimed at providing information on Russian films past, present, and future as a means of targeting foreign investment. For now, Russian directors are floundering and could use some basic lessons from U.S. independent filmmakers. Production budgets have jumped from $200,000 to $700,000 in the past two years, and few directors seem to have any idea how to make films independent of a studio.

One film that did shoot far from a studio turned out to be the festival's big winner and clear critical favorite. *The Prisoner of the Mountains* (renamed from the Russian *Prisoner of the Caucasus*),was filmed in the small Russian republic of Dagestan, next door to Chechnya, just weeks before the start of the war there. Its human interest story, based on a tale thrice told (by Tolstoy, Lermontov, and Pushkin), is presented against authentic scenes of village life, steeped in regional ethnic tradition. All but one leading character (played by one of the country's leading actors, Oleg Menshikov—a sort of Russian Kevin Kline) was cast with non-professionals, leading to truly natural performances. Director Sergei Bodrov will, it seems, go the way of many successful independent directors in the U.S.; he's moved to L.A. and is currently making what he called his last Russian movie.

The big surprise of the festival was the backwater republic of Torkmenistan. With a non-convertible currency and a non-functioning film studio, struggling filmmakers there have managed to turn out only three films in the past four years. But, redolent with poetic imagery and filmed against the country's verdant landscapes, these native works have a hypnotic quality, especially when seen in tandem. *Yandym* (*The Soul Is Burnt Out*), a sophisticated nonlinear weaving of the events of a man's life, earned its co-directors, Bayram Abdullaev and Lora Stepanskaya, a pair of awards.

Back on the Russian front, the festival's oddity was a restoration of the uncompleted last film by Alexander Dovzhenko, *Bye, Bye, America*. After eight rewrites demanded by government censors, Stalin himself shut down the film halfway through production. It had become a grotesque propaganda parody, showing American embassy officials in Moscow as duplicitous, brawling, vodka-swinging drunks. This screening, half a century later, left KGB officials in the audience embarrassed.

KGB types at a film festival? They were attending as part of a sidebar called The End of the Cold War. The very top former foreign intelligence officers of the KGB, CIA, and East German Stasi were participants in a roundtable discussion that was less interesting than the observation that these former enemies had developed genuine friendships. It was a meeting one of the participants described as "unthinkable" just a few years ago.

While Dovzhenko had been a victim of Communism, today's former Soviet Union filmmakers are economic victims of Democracy. And American political imperialism has been replaced by American cultural imperialism, with Russian audiences clamoring to see the sleaziest of Hollywood entertainment. The Cold War is over. We won. Now, who's going to create a Marshall Plan for all those unemployed filmmakers?

Cathy Meils writes about arts and culture in Eastern Europe and is the Prague correspondent for Variety.

education

A Student Gives Film Schools

BY GLENN KAUFMANN



How important is equipment when rating a film school? Less than most people think. Photo: Marcello Gonzalez

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL FOR A GRADUATE degree in film was definitely the right decision for me. I'd freelanced in film for a few years after college, so I had some definite ideas about what I wanted out of a film program. I was convinced it was far easier to get financial aid than production grants, so I set about looking for a program with an emphasis on equipment that would allow me to get my film made. I also wanted a program that was not just a trade school, but something that nurtured creative development. In addition, I wanted instructors who were working filmmakers and a program that emphasized narrative storytelling.

Most of my expectations have been fulfilled, but I felt my film school experience fell short in certain areas, as do many graduate students.

Good Machine producer and Columbia University professor James Schamus offers some advice: "You should not go to film school expecting to be taught anything. If you happen to pick up a camera and learn how to make a film, that is just an added benefit."

What, then, should we reasonably expect out of film schools? How effective are they at preparing students for the real working world of film? Is this their purpose?

I posed these and other questions to students and faculty from a wide variety of film programs, including the American Film Institute (AFI), the University of Southern California (USC), Florida State University, Bard College, Columbia University, New York University (NYU), and the New School for Social Research. These programs differ a great deal in their emphasis, but the notion of what a school should provide seems consistent. How well this education is supplied is another matter. Bottom line: it pays to do your leg work before your homework. The following are some key areas to investigate before sending in a tuition check.

WHAT A FILM SCHOOL OFFERS

EQUIPMENT

You should first look into the type and quality of equipment and facilities and, more importantly, find out exactly what's available to you for your projects and what is for teaching purposes only.

That said, everyone I spoke to felt there is too much emphasis placed on equipment. Phil Katzman, a faculty member at The New School for Social Research in New York City contends, "One of the nice things about filmmaking is that you can use technology that is 75 years old." Hopefully, the equipment won't be that old. But the point is, one can learn the basics of production with basic equipment. You should leave school with a working understanding of both modern and traditional film technology. But as Katzman says, "It is not film schools' responsibility to produce craftspeople."

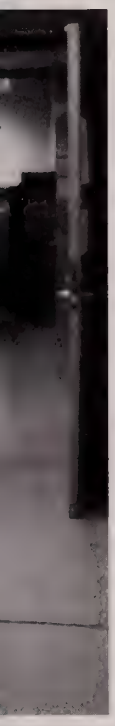
No one dismissed the need to be familiar with current technology. But this should not be a primary focus. In Shamus' view, "Schools should invest only in the very lowest-end digital equipment, as even the high-end equipment will be outdated in five years." He would like to see schools invest in editing skills by letting students shoot on video and do their postproduction on the lowest-level prosumer computer software.

HIDDEN PRODUCTION COSTS

Find out what portion of production expenses you will be responsible for. Many schools casually say, "We pay for all production expenses." Do not believe them. Chances are they pay for stock and processing, and they'll allow you to use their equipment and facili-

Do They Deliver Their Money's Worth?

a Report Card



ties. This is a tremendous help, of course, but you will have additional costs. There's props, wardrobe, food for your crew, and a host of miscellaneous expenses. When budgeting for school, you must expect to cover such expenses. You might ask the schools whether they have any arrangements with local suppliers that may help cut costs. You should also check whether students are covered under the school's insurance in the event of damage to equipment, property, crew, or cast.

Another point to bear in mind: the school's "contribution" to your project frequently means that they will own the rights to your film.

Industry Contacts

Everyone emphasizes the importance of establishing some sort of connection with the filmmaking world. As USC senior Tim Snell says, "I feel as if I know my way around the industry more from the contacts I've made through instructors, workshops at school, and by living in Los Angeles than from the projects I've developed in school." Industry contacts are as vital to your future as the craft and creative skills you'll learn, so it's important to research the school's track record on this score. How many alumni are now working in the industry? Do they come back periodically to teach workshops? How many faculty members are working professionals? When faculty are involved in outside films, how does the school handle filling their course load? While you want to have working professionals as instructors, this can't happen if they are always on set. The school must strike a balance. It speaks volumes if they have a standardized procedure for handling this situation.

You might also ask if faculty routinely (or ever) draft students or alumni to work on their projects. This is particularly helpful if the school is not in a major production center, where students can more easily find their way to production assistant positions and get that all-important exposure to a working environment.

Foundation

A school should be very up-front about the nature of the business you'll be entering. A number of schools admit students by discipline (directing, writing, producing, etc.). While serviceable, this system is somewhat limited. In the vast majority of cases, you'll begin your directing career (and we know that's what everyone really wants to do) not by directing, but by working somewhere down in the ranks. If a school is to be effective at preparing students for work after graduation, they should provide a well-rounded approach—and not just to cinema. But many don't. According to the New School's Phil Katzman, a lack of grounding in the traditional arts is one of the greatest deficiencies in a majority of film programs.

"Because filmmaking represents the highest form of storytelling, it doesn't just rely on technical knowledge; it requires great thinking," says Bard College junior Meri Pritchett. Therefore, "Having a knowledge of languages and math and being steeped in a liberal arts education is the path to communicating a captivating story." Pritchett feels this is one of the strongest aspects of Bard's program.

Bear in mind that any choice of program involves a series of trade-offs. A program that emphasizes aesthetics and writing may not prepare you for an entry-level position in the business; similarly, other schools may leave you with the technical skills to make a film that's slick but weak on ideas.

My particular program has tried to establish something of a balance between the creative and technical sides; nonetheless, there remains

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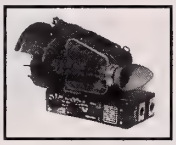
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an inherent bias toward camera work and technical quality. That's not to say we haven't produced good films (we've had many award winners). But I know of several talented writers and visual artists who dropped out of these types of programs to avoid a sea of filter charts and computer manuals and focus on their writing and directing skills. After all, storytelling is the reason we're doing this. Which brings us to the next set of questions.

What You Must Bring to School

Something to Tell

You can't just show up, grab a camera, and make *Annie Hall*. Students often bring creative energy and ambition to a film program. But it's crucial that you also bring story ideas and film concepts. At the very least, you should know the types of stories you are driven to tell.

It helps to bring as much life experience as possible. It's not necessary to put off film school until you've travelled the world, but I have noticed that some of the most convincing and challenging films seem to come from filmmakers with a great deal of unusual life experience. Certainly your work will be more genuine if you begin by working in areas where you have personal experience, emotionally or thematically. Otherwise your film is likely to fall flat if you can't make it credible or get audiences to relate.

Collaboration Skills

You are not the only person in your program. You share equipment, facilities, and faculty with many other students. Almost certainly, you will work on each other's projects. This is a perfect place to begin developing a strong sense of cooperation and collaboration. If people don't enjoy working with you, your work will suffer. If they've had a good experience working with you, they may remember and hire you down the road. Remember, it's not what you know, it's who you know. In the professional world, you'll find yourself locked out of a job if you can't work with other people.

As Martha Caust, a third-year producing fellow at the American Film Institute, summed it up: "Know what stories you want to tell, and have respect for the people you choose to work with."

What a School Doesn't Offer

Job Guarantees

No matter how strong a school's program is or how good their alumni and faculty, a school cannot guarantee a job when you get out. Not to be overly pessimistic, but the industry does not need you. Several thousand film students graduate annually, and there are already plenty of people in the industry. If a school is not up-front about this, they aren't doing you any favors. Chances are, if they don't play straight with you now, they won't once you are in the program.

Babysitting

Film schools will not coddle you. Like the industry, they invite students into their programs for a variety of reasons and talent is not always among them. Bear in mind that schools, even more than the industry, are politically organized. You have to play the game—make friends, not enemies. On the bright side, this, too, is training for the biz.

Report Card

Most faculty members said there needs to be more emphasis on the creative and less on the technical side of filmmaking. How effective are schools in pursuing this goal? "Not that effective," says Katzman. What's worse, they often don't prime students for the real world. "Many schools allow people to believe their original dream," he says. Katzman believes students would be better served by schools that are more realistic about their chances of becoming the next *wunderkind*.

The students, in turn, feel they're now well prepared to work professionally. They said they'd been treated honestly and had received more or less the education they expected. To a person, they all felt that a great deal of this education was due to their own perseverance and held themselves accountable for getting what they wanted out of the resources presented.

So what's the bottom line? Ask a lot of questions, be prepared to collaborate, and work hard to get the kind of education you want.

Glenn Kaufmann is a freelance writer and graduate filmmaker at Florida State University.

Doing It For Themselves

education

Intelligent television by and for kids

BY YOSHA GOLDSTEIN

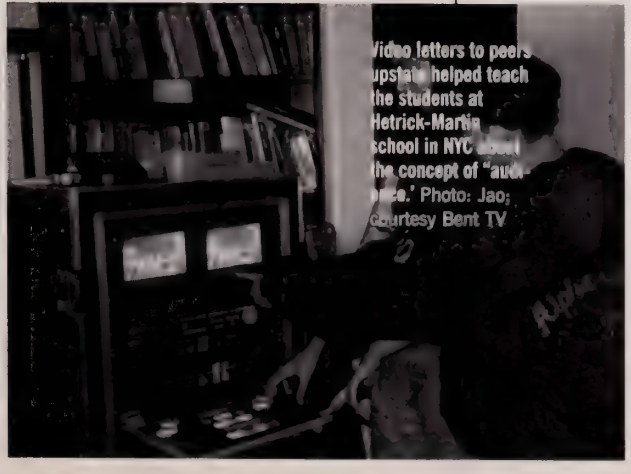
THE REIGN OF PRODUCT-INSPIRED PROGRAMming makes the possibility of critically aware television from a youth's perspective seem very slim indeed. However, media educators around the country are taking pains to prove otherwise. Three new projects offer examples of these innovations in media ed.

Two of the projects come out of New York City's public access television. Bent TV, programming by and for gay youth, provides an angle persistently neglected and misrepresented by straight media. The Global Action Project (GAP) bursts the bubble of inflated campaign rhetoric by representing youth and their concerns through *Youth Agenda 96*, a series that explores election year debate, political promises, and voter participation.

Then there's *Signal to Noise*, a nationally broadcast ITVS series produced by adults that is now packaged for students ranging from high school freshman to college senior. By surveying the telecommunications terrain in the classroom, *Signal to Noise* introduces students to the basics of media literacy and the grammar of television.



Move over, CNN: Election-year issues are examined in a 6-part cable access series produced by teens in the Global Action Project. Educator Susan Seigel, at left, with some of the crew. Courtesy GAP



Video letters to peers upstate helped teach the students at Hetrick-Martin school in NYC about the concept of "audience." Photo: Jao; courtesy Bent TV

Bent TV

ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF STUDENTS from the Hetrick-Martin Institute, an educational and social service agency that includes the Harvey Milk High School, were asked to be guests on *Oprah* to speak on being gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth. Instead, the students spent most of the show waiting in the green room as they watched a group of teenage gay-bashers talk to Oprah about why they beat up gay kids. Only during the final minutes of the show were the Hetrick-Martin students brought on camera to provide a soundbite rebuttal.

Infuriated, the incident convinced the students that if they were going to see their perspectives done justice on television, they would have to create the programming themselves.

Around the same time as the *Oprah* debacle, independent videomaker Catherine Saalfield was developing the forum these students needed—Bent TV. A program of the Drop-In Center at Hetrick-Martin, Bent TV is created through a student video production workshop. The program has a core group of six to eight students who produce programming that ranges from current events and documentaries to dramatic sketches, animation, and video poems. Segments have included a portrait of a transgender youth living and working on the streets, questions to consider for a queer-specific evaluation of colleges, a profile of a young photographer and his documentation of his own HIV-related hospital stay, and relationships with straight friends. As the name of the Bent TV news program "Who Ever Heard?" suggests, they cover stories that would otherwise go unheard.

Representing themselves to each other has been as significant a goal for Bent TV as addressing the misconceptions and absences in mainstream media. Last winter, Bent TV began a video letter exchange with gay peers from Safety Zone, a community center in Troy, New

York. The video letters expand the network of mutual support and affirmation.

"It's important, because instead of just knowing people in Manhattan who are gay, you have people you've never really been in contact with. You can share different questions and experiences," says Bent TV intern Veronica Vitale, 18.

The videotapes alternated between free-form correspondence and conversations on themes of love and death, body and sexuality, conceptions of "home," and coming out to and dealing with parents. Inspired by the openness and intimacy of the exchange, Bent TV also included portions of the letters in their broadcast, and the exchange was developed into an installation at New York's The New Museum of Contemporary Art's "alt.youth.media" exhibition that runs through the fall, with a counterpart viewing space at the Rennsalear Polytechnic Institute's iEAR Studio in Troy.



Gay students at the Hetrick-Martin Institute created Bent TV to give their peers a media voice. Here, Natasha Williams and William Balgobin prep for a shoot. Courtesy Hetrick-Martin Institute

The Global Action Project

EDUCATOR SUSAN SIEGEL AND FILMMAKER Diana Coryat developed GAP as a program for Global Kids, a drop-out prevention program that sponsors peer leadership development workshops in educational organizations and New York City's public schools. Among GAP's projects is an intercultural video exchange program that trains young people around the world to produce video letters on issues that concern them.

"Regular TV is commercial TV," says GAP producer Anisah Miley, 17. "They're trying to sell to the audience. We're not trying sell anything, we tell the truth. What we say is what everyone else is thinking, but they don't have the tools, like we do."

High school students in Guatemala used soap-opera drama to speak about alcoholism and teen pregnancy in their community. Bosnian teenagers living in a Croatian refugee camp interviewed each other and discussed their hopes for the future. Closer to home, students from New York City's Washington Heights produced a tape that shows youth how they can take an active role in organizing for social change.

Most recently, GAP created *Youth Agenda 96*, its first multi-part series which will be on Manhattan public access this fall. A welcome antidote to mainstream media commentary on the campaign for the presidency, *Youth Agenda 96* focuses on issues chosen by the youth producers. These include budget cuts, education and youth services, teen pregnancy, and crime and gun control. Some shows cover the Presidential candidates and their platforms, while others investigate the issues themselves.

For a program on budget cuts, GAP producers followed a coalition of youth activists to New York's state capitol to watch them lobby representatives and testify on the effects of cuts in education and social services. This was supplemented with interviews with students, school administrators, and teachers about their funding concerns as well as re-enacted examples of being disenfranchised as youth. Another show featured a roundtable discussion about why voting is important and how young people can participate even if they're too young to vote.

"*Youth Agenda* lets young people know that they have a voice," says GAP producer Isabel Gonzalez, 17. "The media makes it seem that youth are nothing but bad news, so young people tend to think our voices aren't important or that there isn't anyone who is going to listen to us. I think these videos tell youth that they have a voice and that they can use it and they can make a change."

Below: The ITVS series *Signal to Noise*, an irreverent and revealing examination of television, also serves as a tool for media literacy. Photo: Mark Lipson, courtesy ITVS

Signal to Noise

SIGNAL TO NOISE, THE ITVS-FINANCED SERIES that aired nationally on PBS this past July, was an entertaining primer on the role of television in everyday life. Now its producers are introducing the series' concepts of media literacy and the work of alternative media-makers to an even broader audience by pack-

aging the series for educators.

Co-director Cara Mertes says *Signal to Noise* was designed with teaching applications in mind. "One thing I was always thinking while developing *Signal to Noise* was how to take media literacy and 'mainstream' it," says Mertes. "[That] doesn't mean lowest common denominator, but building critical thinking into a new kind of television."

Each of *Signal to Noise*'s three one-hour programs offers valuable tools for media analysis. Short segments by independent producers (including Not Channel Zero, Kathy High and Liss Platt, Isaac Julien, Louis Alvarez and Andy Kolker, and Yo-TV/Educational Video Center) are interspersed with talking-head commentary and experimental segues. Whether it's Jason Simon's study of a McDonald's television commercial that uses the advertising agency's production notes as voice-over, or Michael Cho's day-in-the-life portrait of what goes into making the news, *Signal to Noise* dissects the grammar of television.

"Providing students with alternative and independent visions encourages them to realize that there are other ways to think about how they may interact with the world than what they are used to seeing in film and television," says *Signal to Noise* co-director Norman Cowie. "Our whole horizon of experience is not simply defined by or articulated within consumer and commodity cultural form."

The *Signal to Noise* educational package is accompanied by a study guide that comes in versions for grades 9-12 as well as the college level. The guide breaks up each hour into four or five themed segments and provides classroom exercises. There's also an extensive bibliography that helps teachers and students further explore areas of interest.

Contact info:

Bent TV: Hetrick-Martin Institute, 2 Astor Place, New York, NY 10013; (212) 274-9782

Global Action Project: 61 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217; (718) 230-8448; http://www.west.net~solution/gap

Signal to Noise: Mixed Media Projects, 594 Broadway, #410, New York, NY 10012; (212) 219-3102. Distribution: Great Plains Network, PO Box 860669, Lincoln, NE 68501; (800) 228-4630.

Yosha Goldstein is a writer and independent videomaker living in Brooklyn.

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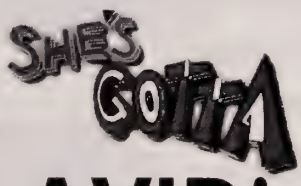
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in *Trees Lounge*, actor-turned-director Steve Buscemi takes a WHAT IF? look at life on Long island.

Lounge

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway is almost free of traffic this afternoon. It's Labor Day 1995, and the locals with cars have already fled the city to pick apples along the Hudson or have a final barbecue upstate, this being one of those gorgeous days with towering white clouds in a luminous blue sky and no sign of New York's deadening summer ozone.

For my part, I'm heading to a funeral parlor in Queens. That's where I'm to find Steve Buscemi, the busiest film actor in New York, directing his first feature film, *Trees Lounge*.

"We've had no trouble with photographers crashing Steve's sets, since he's found some of the most obscure locations in Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island," the unit publicist tells me as we dip off the expressway at Humboldt Street and turn into a Polish neighborhood. Here the official street signs are surmounted by smaller signs bearing names like Walesa Solidarity Square and Pope John Paul II Square. We find a parking space near the Stoberierski Lucase Gardenview Funeral Home, a low brick building across the street from a large and active Catholic Church, and trudge over to the basement of the parochial school, where the film's operations are headquartered for the day.

It's lunch break. Underneath a vast bingo board, 80 members of the cast and crew are polishing off plates loaded with shredded beef, green beans, and old-fashioned Italian cookies. The room is full of extras in dark suits called in for the funeral of the ice cream man (Seymour Cassel), who was one popular guy.

Buscemi sits in costume across the table from his father, who's one of the extras. The director's hair is cropped short in a bad cut, and he wears an old brown suit with slightly flared pants and scuffed black shoes for his lead role as Tommy Basilio, an out-of-work auto mechanic who's half-heartedly trying to salvage his crumbling life. When he's not drinking too much Wild Turkey and beer at Trees Lounge, one of those old dives with dark wood paneling and a dusty Budweiser sign, he's scowling from across the street at his former best friend, who runs an auto repair shop and fired him for "borrowing" a wad of money. His ex-friend now shacks up with Tommy's ex-girlfriend, who's pregnant by one of them. Desperate for work, Tommy takes over his deceased uncle's ice cream truck route, then makes matters worse by getting involved with the 17-year-old daughter of his ex-girlfriend's sister, whose husband is a mean, meaty sonofabitch.

Trees Lounge is a story of friends and family, such as they are. As a film, it's nothing fancy, just real characters in a working-class town whose lives intersect, bump and collide, and sometimes spin out of control. There's a chase scene, but it's two people on foot. There's also a car crash, but no explosion— it's merely Uncle Al's ice cream truck smacking into a car parked in a driveway as the old guy clutches his chest in a fatal heart attack.

"My original intention was to have it be more like an Altman film, where you follow these different lives. But it didn't work out that way," Buscemi told me in July in a midtown

Manhattan coffee shop, after the film premiered at Cannes and was revving up for the Toronto International Film Festival and an October theatrical opening. "My character became, for better or worse, the main story."

With this barfly who's lost his job and his girl, Buscemi wrote himself a part that's a far cry from the roles for which he's best known: as weasely thug (*Reservoir Dogs*), inept kidnapper (*Fargo*), accomplished assassin (*Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead*), doomed sidekick (*Desperado*), mobster (*Miller's Crossing*, *Billy Bathgate*), hapless film director (*Living in Oblivion* and *In the Soup*), way-too-cool performance artist (*New York Stories*), and gay musician with AIDS (*Parting Glances*), among his 40-some film roles.

"I certainly didn't want to play a ratty, seedy guy who gets his ass kicked. I've done that," Buscemi remarked during an Independent Feature Project scriptwriting panel last spring. "But it is hard to get away from that. In my own film, I do get my ass kicked. But there's other things about this character that, as an actor, I haven't gotten to do in other films."

Like kiss the girl and imitate a Munchkin (in the same scene, no less). But his biggest leap was getting to play director for real.

Lizard

As Buscemi sits quietly talking with his father, surrounded by the lunch time hubbub, he seems the embodiment of cool, calm, and collected.

I slide into a chair next to Steve Rosenzweig, the young, goateed production designer whose credits include Hal Hartley's *Amateur* and Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet*. He, like others in the crew, is impressed with the job Buscemi is doing. "It's a very ambitious shoot," he says, given the few days and many locations. "But he has complete mental control of the material. He's so aware of what he's doing that it makes an impossible schedule possible." Overall, says Rosenzweig, "He puts out a good vibe, a confidence vibe."

Kelley Forsyth, one of the two New York line producers, ambles over to chat. She's six months pregnant and looks like an angel, dressed all in white, with cropped golden hair and a supernatural calm. ("The pregnancy hormone is really good for producing," she attests. "It's like a natural high. The executive producers were a little nervous about it. I said at least I'm not going through PMS right now.")

She picks up on Rosenzweig's train of thought. "This is going really smoothly," she confirms. "It's an ambitious script. We have lots of characters; we have a cast of 32 or 33 people. Lots of locations. We're getting a lot of coverage on a 24-day shooting schedule."

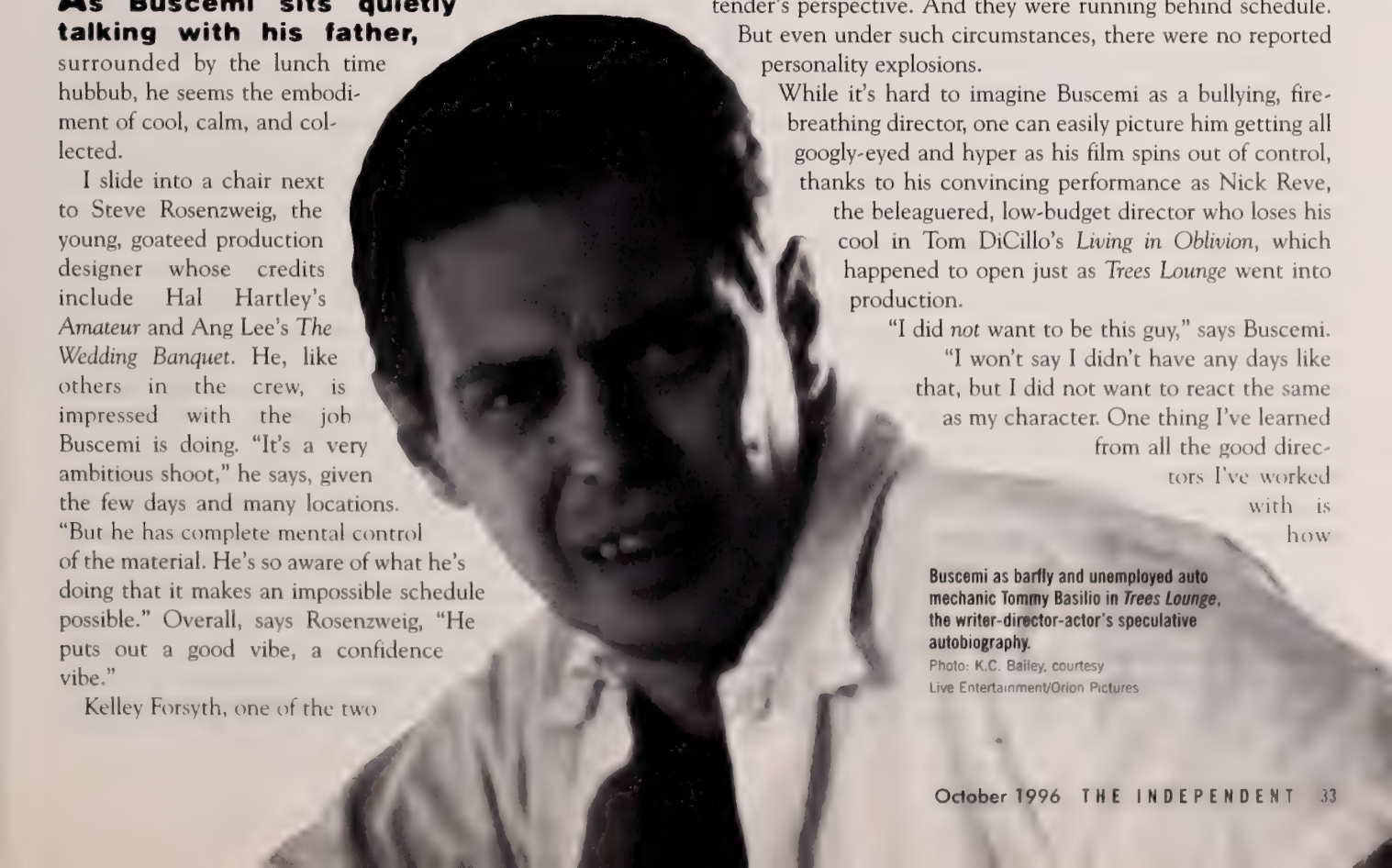
Asked if Buscemi seemed nervous on his first outing as a feature director-writer-lead actor, she pauses to think. "If he was, you wouldn't know it. He's a very good actor, I guess," she laughs. "And he's a very good director."

Prodded to elaborate, she explains, "He thinks very visually. For a film that has a lot of constraints in the budget and time, he's able to consolidate shots and think on his feet in terms of how to make the day without jeopardizing the scene. And he works really well with the actors. I've never seen so many crew members gather around the playback. People are really enjoying watching the takes and watching the acting."

No production is all fun and games, of course. During the week of shooting the Trees Lounge scenes, the bar was hot and crowded, everyone was scrambling on top of each other, and the camera operator had to be squashed amongst the liquor bottles to get the bartender's perspective. And they were running behind schedule. But even under such circumstances, there were no reported personality explosions.

While it's hard to imagine Buscemi as a bullying, fire-breathing director, one can easily picture him getting all googly-eyed and hyper as his film spins out of control, thanks to his convincing performance as Nick Reve, the beleaguered, low-budget director who loses his cool in Tom DiCillo's *Living in Oblivion*, which happened to open just as *Trees Lounge* went into production.

"I did *not* want to be this guy," says Buscemi. "I won't say I didn't have any days like that, but I did not want to react the same as my character. One thing I've learned from all the good directors I've worked with is how



Buscemi as barfly and unemployed auto mechanic Tommy Basilio in *Trees Lounge*, the writer-director-actor's speculative autobiography.
Photo: K.C. Bailey, courtesy Live Entertainment/Orion Pictures

they act on set, how they react to pressure and treat the people they're working with," he continues. "I felt incredibly pressured. I always felt like on every scene we did, we could have used an extra hour or two. Sometimes it was all I could do not to get really excited or show my disappointment and just try to keep things on a positive level. Because if I lose it, forget it. The director has to be the glue that keeps everything together."



Buscemi with *Kids* star Chloe Sevigny on the set of *Trees Lounge*. Photo: Chris Hanley, courtesy Live Entertainment/Orion Pictures

Buscemi was helped by having a capable cast and crew. In addition to Cassel, his co-star in Alexandre Rockwell's *In the Soup* as well as Buscemi's own 1992 short, *What Happened to Pete?*, the actor-turned-director squeezed favors out of such friends as Samuel Jackson, Mimi Rogers, Debi Mazar, and Carol Kane, who agreed to appear in supporting parts. He also rounded up some of the rising stars of independent film, including Chloe Sevigny (*Kids*), Kevin Corrigan (*Walking and Talking*, *Living in Oblivion*), and Michael Imperioli (*Girls Town*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*). He cast family members—his on-screen brother is played by his real-life sibling, Michael, and his father and cherubic five-year-old son appear in walk-on parts. Finally, he drew in colleagues from his years as a downtown performance artist, including Rockets Redglare, Eszter Balint, and, in the second lead, his former performance partner, Mark Boone Junior.

Below the line, Buscemi had in mind a list of people he'd previously worked with. But when it came time to ask, everyone turned out to be busy, except the gaffer, Rich Audino, and the director of photography, Lisa Rinzler (*Menace to Society* and *Dead Presidents*), who had shot *Black Kites*, an experimental film about Sarajevo by Buscemi's wife, Jo Andres. So the crew was largely assembled by his line producers, Forsyth and Sarah Vogel, who had recently finished Jim McKay's *Girls Town*. All told, it was a young crew with impressive chops.

Seymour Cassel bursts into the lunchroom, grinning and slapping backs as he makes his way to the largest dressing room ("SAG rules," quips the publicist), which is made from fabric tacked to thin wooden slats, in the far corner. Forsyth says that no one's asked Cassel yet whether he'll lie in the coffin for the funeral visitation scene. "We're waiting 'til the last minute," she says, her gaze fixed on the actor, who looks robust but vaguely seedy with his bizarre shade of yellow-grey hair. "People have funny feelings about that. We were looking for someone who might be able to body-double for him, but I don't think anyone can double for Seymour Cassel." She turns back to me. "But there's not any real close-up of his face. It's not like *Sybil* or something."

We head over to the funeral home, making our way past the church. A full-blown Catholic wedding is spilling onto the sidewalk, led by a bride and groom both dressed in satiny white. The neighborhood elders have come out to watch the various spectacles and chat with police at the barricades. Three freckled boys on roller blades chase after nonlocals with little autograph notebooks.

Buscemi is busy in a small side room of the funeral parlor decorated with oil paintings and a shag banner of Pope John Paul II. He is setting up a scene in which Tommy greets his parents at Uncle Al's funeral, one of several dryly comic encounters between family members whose small digs, awkward small talk, and barely repressed squabbles are right on target.

All nonessential people (including reporters) are banished to an adjoining room, where the PAs, costume, props, and sound people hang out. A few steps away is an astro-turfed grotto, with plastic flowering vines, a dry fountain with uncollected coins, and a garish blue Madonna treading on a snake whose mouth is stuffed with an apple. There's a bench, but people shy away like it's electrified.

The production mixer, Coll Anderson, offers me some earphones and a seat beside the tiny Sony monitor. "Steve is good with actors," he says. "He gives them the general idea of the scene, then lets them run with it. It must be what he likes as an actor."

We watch Buscemi coach *One Life to Live* soap star Marilyn Chris, who plays Tommy's mother: "Not so angry. You're more frustrated. And look to 'father' when you're talking." For Buscemi, that's a veritable gush of words. On another take, she forgets a line. There's no irritation in his voice as he repeats it to her.

As they wait for the next set-up, Buscemi and Victor Arnold, who plays Tommy's father, patiently hold their marks. Buscemi lets everyone go about their business; he makes small-talk with Arnold or stands silently. Someone moves in and starts fussing with Buscemi's collar; he lifts his chin, looking for all the world like a young boy being readied for Sunday school, though he knows not to squirm.

After the shot, Buscemi checks the playback. "Good," he says. The one take does it. He signals Chris to get ready for the reverse angle.

When they're about to roll, someone notices a buzz coming from a light. The camera operator says he'll take care of it and whaps the side of the light. Nothing. He whaps it harder and the filament drops out. Everyone lets loose on him.

"Hey, Charlie, can you fix the air conditioner? Yo, Charlie, my car isn't running so well; why doncha fix that?" Anderson

yells from the next room, rolling with laughter.

After an interminable pause, it's determined that the bulb can't be replaced, so they strike the position and move on.

Other than this location in Greenpoint and Trees Lounge in Glendale, most of *Trees Lounge* was filmed in Buscemi's hometown of Valley Stream, a Long Island bedroom community. "It's a very white-bread, working-class, conservative town with an active bar life—or that's how I remember it," Buscemi says.

This portrait of life in the Long Island suburbs is Buscemi's speculative autobiography. "That was the springboard for the idea," he says over the dregs of his coffee. "If I hadn't moved out of Valley Stream and found acting, what would I be doing there now?"

Buscemi's past suffuses *Trees Lounge*, flashing before us like a slide show: there are the Buscemi boys; there's Pop; there's the Valley Stream gas station, the baseball field, and the old ice cream truck. The gas station is beside Buscemi's old house, and his parents still live around the corner. (The set photographer thought it was "so cute" when the director's mom would stroll by and wave, yelling, "Hi, Steve!")

Buscemi's pastimes are also on display. He spent some time pumping gas. "Had I stayed there, I probably would have been groomed to be a mechanic," he says. "But you have to love it. That's why Tommy doesn't succeed at it; it's just a job." He also drove an ice cream truck for two summers—the same route as Uncle Al's. And from age 16 on, with fake ID in hand, he spent a lot of time—too much—hanging out in bars.

It was acting that finally got him out of Valley Stream. ("I was suicidal when I left," he's been known to say.) It took him awhile; Buscemi had a level of shyness to overcome before he dared try his hand at acting during his senior year of high school. Even when he enrolled in the community college, he couldn't make himself declare a major in theater. "I still didn't have the courage to take theater, because then people would have known how serious I was about it," he says. Buscemi dropped out after one semester.

But then, at his father's encouragement, he started going into Manhattan four times a week to study Method acting, first at Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio, then with his son, John Strasberg. At age 20, the budding actor finally made his escape to the East Village.

There Buscemi did stand-up comedy for a couple of years, then fell into the downtown performance art scene. During this time, he did something few struggling actors do—he took a job as a fireman.

"At my father's request, I had taken the test when I was living in Long Island, because he believed in civil service jobs," the lanky actor recalls. "When my name came up at the fire department, his advice was, 'Take the job; you're only 22. You can do this for 20 years, then when you retire at 42 at half-pay, you can still have plenty of time to act.' "

Buscemi took the job, but found he didn't have to wait 20 years to act; it turned out that firemen's flexible hours meshed quite well with his schedule as a performance artist.

But he kept his other career hidden from his firehouse peers. Halfway through his four-year stint, they caught on. "They couldn't believe I was an actor, because I was so quiet. But then I kinda came out of my shell. The more I hung out with them, I would start to make them laugh. Then at the fireman's parties, they would make me do a stand-up act. And they would come see the plays."

It was as a performance artist that Buscemi started writing. He hooked up with Tom Wright and Mark Boone Junior, who were performing some deadpan one-acts called the "Manhood Series." They would improvise all afternoon, transcribe the audiotapes of their session, then edit these into performance pieces. Buscemi and Boone eventually split off and co-wrote their own funny, strange skits, performing at downtown venues like Club 57, Darinka, 8BC, and the Pyramid Club.

"Mark and I were really good at dialogue and situations," Buscemi says. "In one, we were two Hari Krishnas stuck in an elevator, and he's losing his faith. In another piece, the lights come up and we're two dogs sleeping—we're lying on the floor for a good minute." He laughs at the craziness of it. "Then we wake up, fight, and bite each other, and the audience realizes we're dogs. Then after awhile they realize we're two guys in prison, and this is one of the ways we pass the time—we act like animals.

"Our staging was very simple; we never gave away too much, so the audiences maybe wouldn't know who were or what was going on in the first few minutes. That was something that stayed with me when I was writing the screenplay, because I find in so many movies that so much information is given so soon, you just lose interest."

In 1989 Buscemi hunched over his computer to begin his first screenplay from scratch. The biggest challenge was making the switch from short vignettes to a full-blown dramatic script.

"Structure," he nods, "that was the hardest part—to think of a story and a structure to put it in. I didn't know how to begin, so I took a screenwriters' workshop. After that, I was *really* confused. It wasn't until I saw a John Cassavetes retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art that I realized you can just start writing. [Screenwriting instructor John Truby] stressed you have to know your beginning, middle, and end before you even start, or else you're going to get in trouble. I agree with him. But I don't think that getting in trouble is a bad thing. You can really find out things [about your characters].

"[Cassavetes's] films are not heavy on plot; they're really about people. That was inspiring to me, to *not* have the big picture in mind, but to start with these characters and see what happens to them, and reshape it later."

In 1990, he made a few stabs at getting *Trees Lounge* produced. "I'd have meetings with people, and I'd be very timid. I don't think I sounded too confident," he reflects. Today he's not sorry he had to wait to find financing. "I don't think I would have been ready to do this film five years ago," he admits. "I

don't think the script was ready then."

In his rewrites, Buscemi focused the script, eliminating characters and exposition overkill. He also fixed a problem created by his long-standing interest in dialogue. In his original script, there would be one sentence of description, followed by four pages of dialogue, then another solitary line of description. "It was hard for people who didn't know me to know what the feeling of the script was going to be," he admitted during the scriptwriting panel. "In my head, I said, 'I know what the feeling is.' But I had to go back and really try to write those descriptive things and tell how people were feeling. Most executives who are reading something want it to be obvious. You want to make sure they understand."

There was also the fact that Buscemi himself was in no way ready to direct a feature. "I just didn't know enough about filmmaking then. Not that I know that much now," Buscemi says. "I could kick myself for how many times I've been on movie sets and not paid attention to what the DP is doing, or what the lighting was like, or why they arrived at this particular camera move. Once I started to visualize what I was gonna do, I realized, 'Oh my God, what *am* I gonna do?' "

He got his feet wet by directing a short. "I wanted to see if I could act and direct at the same time. And that helped. It made a difference in *me* and I think that came across to the people I was trying to pitch. Also, as an actor, I'd done a lot of work, but not a lot that money people really knew. That changed a lot after *Reservoir Dogs*."

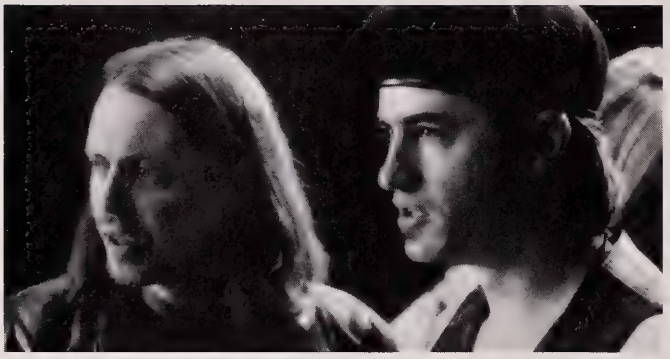
With Mr. Pink opening doors and a fatter Rolodex from a decade of film acting, Buscemi finally got the ball rolling. Through mutual friends, he found his producers, the Los Angeles-based Chris Hanley and Brad Wyman. Though Live Entertainment had turned Buscemi down twice before, Wyman went back when staff changes brought in some of his contacts. More importantly, Buscemi now had a package of name actors, including himself, Samuel Jackson, Mimi Rogers, and Carol Kane. This time the company gave the green light and financed it to the tune of $1.3 million, with Nick Wechsler and Julie Silverman executive producing. Live Entertainment hooked up with Orion Pictures to co-distribute.

Asked if he wants to continue down the writing-directing path, Buscemi nods. "I want to have that option." Is there another script currently in the works? "No." He gives a self-mocking smirk, then adds, "Something will hit me."

For the moment, though, Buscemi has a full plate. He barely has time to promote *Trees Lounge*, as he's currently acting in *Con Air*, a big-budget action film directed by TKTKT. Between this year and last, he's been one busy thespian, appearing in Robert Rodriguez's *Desperado*, the Coen brothers' *Fargo*, *Living in Oblivion*, *Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead*, Robert Altman's *Kansas City*, Alexandre Rockwell's *Someone to Love*, *John Carpenter's Escape from L.A.*, as well as his own *Trees Lounge*.

As an actor, Buscemi is moving on to bigger productions. "I don't feel like I have to keep doing low-budget independent films for the sake of doing them, just because that's where I came from," he says. "But if I do more work as a director, that's probably where I'm going to get my financing.

"I'll always be acting," he notes, "but I get restless as an actor—being on set and feeling like I have energy to burn. You do your turn, then have to wait two or three hours. I noticed pretty quickly the director is always active."





Play-acting director: From left, Buscemi as Nick Reve, the beleaguered no-budget helmer who loses his cool in *Living in Oblivion*; and as *In the Soup*'s Adolpho Rollo, a neophyte director with a shady investor (Seymour Cassel).

Back on the *Trees Lounge* set, Buscemi has no problem keeping busy. He's in the funeral parlor's visitation room conferring with the DP, while Cassel is lying down in an ivory casket flanked by billowing flowers and antique globed floor lamps. A Russian Madonna icon stares forlornly over the army of chairs facing the coffin, where the crew casually sprawls while listening to the AD explain the scene.

Buscemi goes over the blocking with his film mother, his real father, and Uncle Al's widow. "Give her a kiss, Josie. Good. Now lean over to the other side and hug your other son. Now dad, whisper something in her ear."

The DP informs Buscemi that they might lose Cassel's face using the planned shot. The actor's eyes are closed and he's smiling. "It's okay to lose Seymour," Buscemi says. They work out the camera move, then leave to allow the department heads to dress the set. As Cassel strolls down the aisle, he remarks to his on-screen widow, "When I'm gone, I wanna have a mattress like that." She smiles and says, "Cremation is better."

The crew members fuss with the funeral bouquets and set up the camera position. One lanky guy with headphones plops into the casket to help them line up the shot. Watching them crank up the casket, Marilyn Chris quips, "It's the first rest he's had in three weeks."

Outside, Buscemi gets no rest. He's sitting in a beat-up car with his brother, already knee-deep in another scene. Doing double-duty as actor and director, he's got a million things to keep track of. If he likes being active, he's having a helluva great day.

Patricia Thomson is editor of The Independent.

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Sony's DXC-1000 Digital Camcorder Still Lacks Essential Accessories

BY ROB ROWND

SONY RELEASED ITS NEW DXC-1000 DIGITAL video camera last fall with fanfare befitting a coronation. However, it's now a year later, and the camcorder still isn't supported by enough ancillary gear or readily accessible technical information to be considered more than a very good consumer product.

Last winter's magazine reviews and Sony product literature created the impression that a full line of digital video products would be released shortly. However, at this writing there's no sign of the promised decks, matte boxes, microphones, Firewire-compatible computer boards, or broadcast-quality nonlinear editing system. These absences limit the camera's usefulness.

On the upside, the DXC-1000's digital compression makes for outstanding picture quality, and the camera body is lightweight, simple to operate, and just large enough for good hand-held work. At the price, the floating-prism image stabilizing feature and time-lapse system are the best on the market.



Photo: Rob Rownd

Both the camera controls and the new 6mm tape format show a lot of promise. The digital tape uses a 4:1:1 compression system that records and reproduces luminance (black and white) picture information as cleanly as 4:2:2 digital Beta or D2. However, because its color information is compressed one step further than professional formats', the DXC-1000 doesn't do well with non-saturated hues in low light. Working with available light in a dim restaurant, for example, flesh tones tended to go pink, while the whites on the napkins and tablecloth held steady. When we shot outdoors or added enough tungsten light to take the fast F1.6 lens up to a third from wide open, it was possible to get good, subtle colors across the full range of exposures.

It is possible to override all automatic controls at the flip of a switch. The manual controls feel like a film camera's: The iris clicks open and shut in sync with the knob, and the large focus ring makes racks simple and precise. The zoom control, while rather small, does feather on and off gradually.

The camera's electronic settings are controlled through scrolling menus in the viewfinder. White balance can be preset to daylight, tungsten, or manual. The manual setting holds without drifting when you power down the camera or change batteries. The time-lapse function produces a clean image, but it's limited to four pre-set exposure rates and four pre-set durations.

The DXC-1000's best special feature is its steady-shot internal image stabilizer, which subtly takes the edge off both hand-held and intentionally wobbly tracking shots.

Filtration capabilities look promising. The lens has a screw mount for one 52mm filter, and the twist-lock mount for the lens hood would be perfect for a lightweight matte box. The high quality of the DXC-1000's raw picture begs for experimenting with soft effects, pro-mist, and grad filters, but compatible matte boxes aren't currently available from Sony or third-party vendors.

The biggest drawback of the DXC-1000 is its single audio jack, which outputs a non-standard 3-volt phantom power supply. This mini-sized jack overrides the on-camera mic to lay down two identical tracks of 12-bit audio. Not only has Sony not yet released a mic that uses this unique power system, but also has not made schematics of the audio circuitry available to those who would modify an existing audio package to work with the system. Unless you're willing to risk frying either the camera or mic, you're stuck with the existing on-camera mic or using a slate and a separate Nagra or DAT package to record sound.

The new Sony camcorder's final frustration lies in its new Firewire digital interface, which is currently unable to transfer the digital signal to either a nonlinear editing system or other tape format for editing. Firewire is designed to replace SCSI cables with something the size of a telephone jack that passes digital information at six times the speed of a PCI slot, but Sony hasn't released the computer board or editing system behind it. This is especially disappointing, since the camera's photo-mode feature lets you take still shots that are recorded to tape in six-second blocks. If you could hose these snap-shots directly into a computer, the DXC-1000 would be a great location-scouting and storyboarding tool.

For now, the DXC-1000 doesn't offer more than any other top-line consumer camcorder. It's useful as a notebook or scratchpad to work out ideas, but for $3,000, it should do more.

Rob Rownd (RRownd@aol.com) is a writer and filmmaker based in Chicago.



BY MITCH ALBERT

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A YOUNG LORD GROWS older? Iris Morales' **Palante Siempre Palante! The Young Lords** (47 min., Beta SP) looks back and forth at the militant Puertoriqueno civil rights organization influenced by and contemporary to the Black Panthers' formation. The Lords, of New York City, "cleaned up the garbage" in the barrios, "spearheaded public health initiatives, fought for bilingual education, and demanded that the city address their concerns." Of course, the city ignored them until the Lords staged occupations of a local church (from which they set up a children's breakfast program and organized TB testing) and a South Bronx hospital to dramatize their concerns for the health of their communities. Archival footage and interviews with former Lords —who now are journalists in various media and notable community leaders—review their journey. The documentary will be broadcast by P.O.V. on Oct. 18. *Palante Siempre Palante! The Young Lords*, Juliet Brenegar or Diane Rostyak, P.O.V., 220 W. 19th St., 11th fl., NY, NY 10011; (212) 989-8121; fax: 989-8230; brenegar@pov.org; rostyak@pov.org.

Another P.O.V. fall special is the Academy Award-winning documentary **Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision** (1:22, 16mm). In 1981, Maya Lin's design was selected for the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, D.C., and she became a controversial figure at the ripe old age of 21. Critics including Patrick Buchanan and Rep. Henry Hyde led the fight against the memorial, a long wall of polished black granite inscribed with the 57,661 names of those Americans who died in Vietnam. Lin's persistence in confronting American social issues with integrity is chronicled in *Maya Lin*. A co-presentation of the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), this documentary airs November 27 on PBS.

Seventeen-year-old Alejandro Pisani, born in Venezuela, moves to Boston and begins producing a commercial TV show on a local network station. That's not a pitch, that's a bio: Pisani is a real-life whiz kid whose show, **Jam House**, reaches 400,000 homes on Cuencvision, WCEA TV-19. Check out the show and write; maybe he'll give you a job as a PA or something. *Jam House*, Alejandro Pisani Productions, Box 129, Watertown, MA 02272; (617) 367-0811.

Speaking of brief childhoods, **Maybe... Memories Do Not Burn** (30 min., Beta SP), from Paul Dokuchitz and Marianne McCune, explores the devastated psychic terrain of young war survivors. In 1994-95, the filmmakers set up shop on two tiny islands off the Adriatic coast, where summer camps for the orphans and refugee children of the brutal Balkan war were established by a relief organization. The documentary focuses on two weeks in the lives of children enjoying creative activities in a secure space for perhaps the first time in years. Interviews with the kids reveal the complex layers of doubt, fear, and hope that war-traumatized children harbor, and address their capacity for renewal. *Maybe... Memories Do Not Burn*, The Icarus Endeavor, 263 West 30th St., 3rd fl., New York, NY 10001; (212) 967-1667; fax: 967-5147.



Young Balkan war survivors get a respite in *Maybe...Memories Do Not Burn*.
Courtesy filmmaker

Curious George is alive and well and living on New York's Lower East Side in Jonathan O'Beirne's **Bananas in Bedlam** (15 min., 16mm), a comedic mockumentary tracing the downward slide of the beloved chimp after his bitter rejection by the Man in the Yellow Hat. The short also features cameos by other once-beloved, now ruined children's-book characters, including Harold, now a convicted rapist obsessed by his outsized purple crayon. *Bananas in Bedlam*, Think Tank Productions, 215 E. 24th St., Suite #215, New York, NY 10010; (212) 685-8066.

Mr. Tuttle Goes Washington: What better way for a man down on his luck to land a high-paying job—with few other skills than knowing how to milk a cow—than to run for Congress? That's Fred Tuttle's idea, anyway. Seventy-three years old, the retired dairy farmer decides to aim high as an independent on the Regressive Party ticket in Vermont, against a six-time incumbent, all the while aided by his 93-year-old dad. (No makeup here: those are

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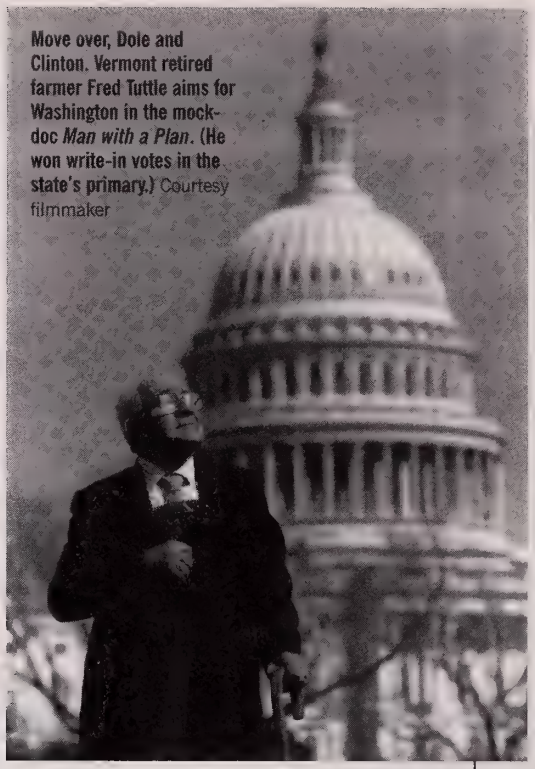
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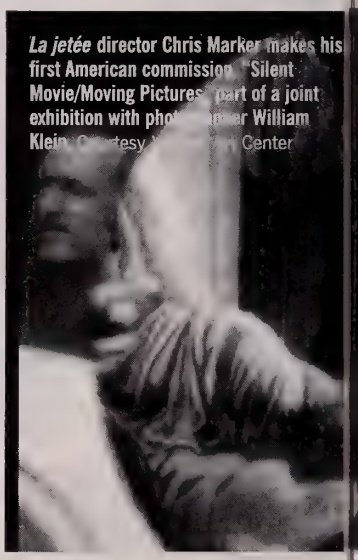
Move over, Dole and Clinton. Vermont retired farmer Fred Tuttle aims for Washington in the mock-doc *Man with a Plan*. (He won write-in votes in the state's primary.) Courtesy filmmaker

the actors' ages as well.) **Man with a Plan** (89 min., 35 mm), a comedy from Vermonter John O'Brien, has won accolades from New York to Burlington, Vermont, plus comparisons to Jean Renoir and *This Is Spinal Tap* along the way. The film is in theaters this fall. *Man with a Plan*, The Fred Herman Co., Landgoes Farm, Tunbridge, VT 05077; (802) 889-3474; fax: 763-8334.

More down-home fun, kinda, with **Ramming Speed** (91 min., 16 mm), a pulse-pounder about the "illegal metamphetamine" craze centered in North Texas. Over the years, director Dwight Greene has amassed articles and personal accounts of "the violent drug deals gone bad, psychotic 'crank' addicts, kidnappings, poisonous explosions, and notorious crimes." This film is the result, "the first to look at this world, the drug, and the outlaws who created it." *Ramming Speed*, Greene Enterprises, 6400 Johns Way, Fort Worth, TX 76135; (817) 237-1008; 390-7780.

Remember the March on Washington, the 1963 turning point in the history of civil rights consciousness-raising? Led by Martin Luther King, Jr.? Your memory's not too good: the march was led by A. Philip Randolph, a 74-year-old African American labor leader. **A. Philip Randolph: For Jobs and Freedom** (86 min., video), chronicles the life of the man who led a militant struggle for labor rights, faced down Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, was labeled by the U.S. Attorney General "the most dangerous Negro in America," and passed the torch of leadership to the Rev. M. L. King. This documentary, produced by WETA-TV and directed by Dante James, is now available from California Newsreel. *A. Philip Randolph: For Jobs and Freedom*, California Newsreel, 149 9th St., #420, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196; fax: 621-6522; newsreel@lx.netcom.com.

French filmmaker Chris Marker is not a name you'll find at the local Blockbuster, not even for his seminal short *La jetée* (Terry Gilliam's inspiration for *12 Monkeys*). The American-born William Klein, a resident of France since the end of World War II, is best known for his energetic photographs of New York in the 1950s. The connection? Minneapolis' Walker Art Center, in an elegant bit of curating, has mounted a joint exhibition of recent work from these two landmark artists. **Chris Marker and William Klein: *Silent Movie/Moving Pictures*** will run from Sept. 22-Dec. 15. Marker's *Silent Movie* is an installation created in honor of the 100th anniversary of the cinema. Towering a dozen feet high, the work features five stacked video monitors showing a series of film clips from his personal archives; also part of Marker's exhibit are a group of computer-designed movie posters for imaginary silent-era films. Klein's *Moving Pictures* comprises "painted contacts," reproductions of portions of original contact sheets featuring key images from his career, which he has hand-painted. *Silent Movie/Moving Pictures*, Walker Art Center, Vineland Pl., Minneapolis, MN 55403; (612) 375-7600.



La jetée director Chris Marker makes his first American commission, "Silent Movie/Moving Pictures," part of a joint exhibition with photographer William Klein. Courtesy Walker Art Center

"And now, a brief and charming word about herpes." With AIDS for competition,

herpes seems like a piker in the sexually transmitted disease huddle. Plus, it's hard to make a sexy commercial about it. Like the ad agencies of the 1920s, the American College Health Association and pharmaceutical company GlaxoWellcome, Inc., staged a public service announcement contest both to spotlight the problem and get some input (not to mention work) from the student segment of their key constituency, adults 18-24. The winner, ad major Janny C. Yang of San Francisco, received a $10,000 scholarship and the right to coproduce her entry for national TV broadcast. The PSA, **Matches** (30 sec., video) displays a match that keeps flaring up even after it dies down—just like, the narration reminds us, herpes itself. Other winners included a postcoital couple lying to each other about the number of partners they've had (while the real numbers—legion—fade in behind the bed), and a dinner-to-bed-to-herpes clinic travelogue featuring two clueless kids. *Matches*, Tuning Into Herpes, 111 E. 14th St., Suite #385, New York, NY 10003; (212) 886-2250; HerpesPSA@aol.com.

Straight Outta Ulan Bator: Once the stock emblem of remote locales, (Outer) Mongolia has shrugged off 70 years of Soviet mismanagement to join the world, for better or worse, in turning out rock'n'roll bands and democracy movements. Documentarian Lisa Seidenberg's **Mongolia on the Edge of Time** (30 min., video) looks at this country five years after independence, and mixes archival footage, Mongolian landscapes, and rock music to evoke this transition. *Mongolia on the Edge of Time*, Metro Video, 16 McKinley St., Rowayton, CT, 06853; lian@igc.apc.org.



Mitch Albert is a regular contributor to The Independent.

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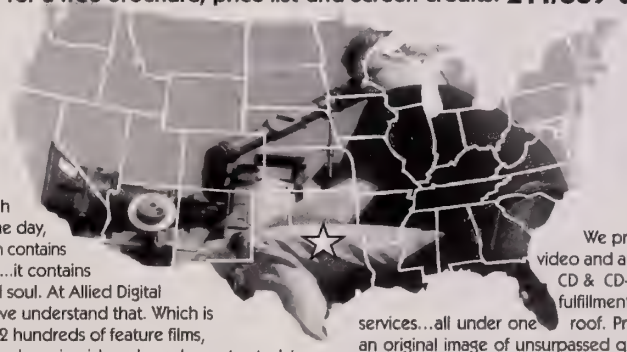
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DOMESTIC

BLACK MARIA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Jan. through May, NJ. Fest seeks to "exhibit & reward compelling new ind. media & to advocate exceptional achievement that expands the expressive terrain of film & video." Fest founded in 1980 in honor of Thomas A. Edison, who developed motion picture medium & whose film studio, the Black Maria in West Orange, NJ, was the world's first. No cat-related restrictions; each work judged on own merit. Fest looking for any combination of inventive, incisive, responsive & provocative work of any style or genre. Featured works screened at over 50 venues throughout US & Canada, incl. Donnell Library & Millenium, NYC; IMAGE, Atlanta; School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Chicago Art Institute; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts & Rutgers Film Co-op. Program also cablecast to 250,000 subscribers. Awards: Jurors' Choice Works (share $2,500); Jurors' Citation Works (share $2,000); Directors Choice Works (share $1,000); plus $5,000+ in exhibition honoraria. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 3-1/2 yrs & may be up to 100 min. Entry fee: $35-$45, depending on length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. Deadline: mid-Nov. Contact: John Columbus, fest dir., Black Maria Film & Video Festival, Dept. of Media Arts, Jersey City State College, 203 West Side Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07305; (201) 200-2043; fax: 3490.

HONOLULU UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 15-23. Now in second year. All genres accepted. The five best films as voted by viewers will receive the "HUFF Best of Fest" trophy as well as prizes. Entry fee: $10. Formats: VHS and NTSC. Deadline: films, Oct. 7. Send SASE with entry. For entry forms and info, contact: Christopher Kahunahana, fest director, Box 241-120, Honolulu, HI 96824-0120; (808) 735-2242; fax: 735-3787.

IMAGEFEST '96 SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Dec., CA. Now in third year, this non-competitive short film & video festival showcases San Francisco Bay-area film/videomakers. Bay-area residents (408, 415, 510 area codes) can submit films and videos under 30 min. Industrial, promotional, instructional works not appropriate. IMAGEFEST '96 sponsored by IMAGE (Independent Media Artists Group), nonprofit organization of independent film/video/multimedia makers based in Palo Alto. Co-sponsored by City of Palo Alto and CAPA. Formats: 16mm, S-VHS, VHS; preview on VHS. First deadline: Entry fee: $10 (IMAGE members allowed one free entry by this date). Late deadline: Oct. 10. Entry fee: $20. For entry forms & info, contact: IMAGEFEST '96, Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303; (415) 856-1305, image@mediacity.com.

LESBIAN LOOKS FOURTH ANNUAL FILM & VIDEO SERIES, AZ. Lesbian Looks seeks innovative works by and about lesbians for February 1997 fest. Series screens on University of Arizona campus to audiences of 200-250, with possible cablecast on Access Tucson. 16mm, 3/4", VHS NTSC only. Deadline: Dec. 15. Send VHS preview tape, brief synopsis, artist bio & SASE for return to: Beverly Seckinger, Media Arts, Harvill 226, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721; (520) 621-1239; fax: 621-9662; bseckinge@u.arizona.edu.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 31-Feb. 9., FL. Important regional cultural event brings new int'l cinema to S. Florida; helps develop audiences for new film talents & highlights "often unrecognized countries for their contribution to film." Fest is known as gateway for Spanish language films into US. All types of films considered: features, docs, shorts, experimental & animation. Seminar Program offers workshops on producing, directing, cinematography, writing, editing. Entries should not be in theatrical release in US or Europe. All films must be completed since 1986. All short films must be betw 2-10 min.; features must be over 80 min. No entry fee. Formats accepted: 35mm. Deadline: Nov 1. A written request for appl. must be mailed or faxed to: Film Society of Miami, Film Entries, 444 Brickell Ave., Ste. 229, Miami, FL 33131; fax: (305) 577-9768. No phone calls.

NEW YORK UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, March 19-23, NY. Renegade fest in 4th year showcases films by cutting-edge artists expressing fiercely new visions. Over 60 features & short films screened in high-profile, downtown Manhattan event. Awards for best feature, short, doc & experimental, plus Festival Choice. Formats: 35 mm, 16 mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. Preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $30. Deadline: Jan 7. Contact: NYUFF, 225 Lafayette St., Suite 409, NYC 10012; (212) 925-3440; fax: 925-3430; festival@nyuff.com; http://www.nyuff.com.

NORTEL PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan., CA. 17-day fest, founded in 1990, presents major opening & closing films, galas honoring film industry legends, retros, PSIFF Awards & industry & consulate receptions. Audience awards also offered. About 150 films from 25 countries participate. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr; fest prefers premieres, but not a requirement. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $60 feature/$35 short. Deadline: early Nov. Contact: Craig Prater, exec. dir., Nortel Palm Springs Int'l Film Festival, Box 2230, Palm Springs, CA 92263; (619) 322-2930; fax: 4087.

PORTLAND JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Jan., OR. Now in 3rd yr, fest programs int'l selection of film exploring Jewish history, culture & identity in dramatic features & challenging docs that celebrate diversity of Jewish life. All films followed by discussion; screenings held at Portland Art Museum. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Nov. Contact: Howard Aaron, Portland Jewish Film Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 226-4842.

PORTLAND REEL MUSIC FESTIVAL, Jan., OR. Reel Music celebrates intersection of film/video & music. Program is eclectic blend of new & vintage works that document, interpret & celebrate great artists in jazz, rock, blues, country, reggae, third world, classical, opera & new music. Docs, shorts, animation, musicals, bio-pics, concerts, etc. welcomed. Special programs incl. live film/music performances & concerts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", 8mm. No entry fee. Deadline: Mid-Nov. Contact: Bill Foster, dir., Portland Reel Music Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 226-4842.

RAINY STATES FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 13-16, WA. Annual showcase of ind. & low-budget films produced in Pacific Northwest. Founded in 1994, fest programs about 6 features & 20 shorts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $20+video. Deadline: Dec 1. Contact: Chip Phillips, exec. dir., Rainy States Film Festival, 1202 East Pike, Ste. 1240, Seattle, WA 98122-3934; (206) 322-3572; chip@halcyn.com.

SAN ANTONIO CINEFESTIVAL, Jan. 29-Feb. 2., TX. Now in 20th edition, this is country's longest running int'l Latino film & video exhibition. Forum for representative sampling of works produced by & about Latinos & int'l Latino experience & fosters discussion of topics affecting media arts. Fest exhibits programmed entries at Guadalupe Theater & other venues. Includes public forums/discussions & media arts workshops. CineFestival's Premio Mesquite & Honorable Mentions awarded by jury of media arts & humanities professions & Gualalupe Theater constituents, in cats of fiction (short/feature/made for TV), doc (short/feature/made for TV), animation, experimental & emerging artists/first work. Special jury award presented noncategorically to entry that best exemplifies spirit of CineFestival. Special programs highlighting past 20 yrs, w/ invited filmmakers & special guests. Any agency, organization or individual producing films &/or videos of direct relevance to Latino community is eligible. Work must have been completed within previous 2 yrs. PSAs, industrials & promotional works not eligible. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-8, 3/4", 1/2".

Deadline: Nov 1. Contact: San Antonio CineFestival, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St., San Antonio, TX 78207; (210) 271-3151; fax: 271-3480; guadarts@aol.com.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL GOLDEN GATE AWARDS, April 24-May 8, CA. Competitive section of this festival recognizes excellence in docs, shorts, animation, experimental film, video & TV production, media & personal doc. GGA Competition includes special category devoted to a topical issue; this year is Media and Society—docs on a particular trend or issue in mass media and its impact on life & culture. Fest introducing First Person Doc category this year, and GGA also has new categories for Music Videos & PSAs. GGA comprises 4 divisions: Film & Video, for independent films; TV; New Visions, for works that challenge the language of film and video; and Bay Area Film/Video. GGA winners receive either Golden Spire Trophy, Silver Spire trophy, or Certificate of Merit. Golden Spire winners also receive a $500 honorarium. Deadline: Dec. 13. Contact: Brian Gordon, GGA, San Francisco Int'l Film Festival, 1521 Eddy Street, San Francisco, CA 94115-4102; (415) 929-5014; fax: 921-5032; sfiff@sfiff.org; http://www.sfiff.org.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL, March, CA. Founded in 1982, noncompetitive fest one of larger & more prominent showcases for latest & best works from Asian Americans & Asia, offering mix of about 100-120 works, incl. small number of features (20-30) w/ strong ind. & experimental representation. Focus is on contemporary films & videos; program incl. special panels & other events. Entry fee: $10. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mid-Oct. Contact: Corey Tong/Paul Yi, co-directors, SF Int'l Asian American Film Festival, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; naata@sirius.com.

SANTA CLARITA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 7-13, CA. Fest seeks family-themed feature films, animation features, documentaries, shorts, and student shorts as well as screenplays for feature and animation films. Includes seminars and studio tours. Top 10 scripts receive readings. Award of film services/supplies/mentorship for top student filmmaker. All entries must have been completed after Oct. 1995 and be in English or dubbed in English. Entry fees: $40, student films; $50, shorts; $80, screenplays; $100, features. Deadline: films and screenplays, Nov. 1; student shorts, Nov. 15. Fest address: Patte Dee, SCIFF Program Director, Box 801507, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-1507; (805) 257-3131; fax: 257-8989.

SLAMDANCE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan 17-23, UT. Primary objective of fest is to present new independent films made by new filmmakers. Started by 3 filmmakers in '95, fest has developed quickly & is valuable outlet for independent film. Most important component is American Feature Film Competition; in 1996, 12 films competed. Slamdance also shows shorts, docs, foreign features & animated works. All films showcased in 1996 attracted positive industry interest & several received agency rep & distribution offers. Entry fee: $20-$50. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Oct 11 (early), Nov. 8 (late). Contact: Jon Fitzgerald, exec. dir./Peter Baxter, creative dir., Slamdance Int'l Film Festival, 2633 Lincoln Blvd., #536, Santa Monica, CA 90068; (310) 204-7977.

TELLURIDE INDEPENDENT FILM & SCREENWRITERS FESTIVAL, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, CO. Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 1997, CO. Festival/seminar dedicated to spirit/advancement of independent film/videomaking & screenwriting. 12 films (35mm) and 12 videos selected for viewing & 3 screenplays get readings. All cats eligible; WGA-registered scripts (no more than 120 pages). Film/video submissions must be on 1/2" VHS. Accepted entries receive complimentary 4-nights lodging, 1-day ski pass & ski equipment rental. Deadline: Nov. 1. Entry fee: $30. For info & appl.: TIFSF, c/o Queso Prod., Box 1007, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 728-5398; fax: 728-6254; indiefest@infozone.org; http://telluridemm.com/indifest.html.

FOREIGN

BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb., Germany. One of world's top fests. Now in 47th edition, 9,000 guests attend fest & European Film Market each yr. Offers participating filmmakers hospitable environment. Supported by all levels of German government, fest divided into 7 sections, each w/ own character & organization. Int'l Competition: newly released & unreleased 70mm & 35mm features programmed by invitation of fest director. Int'l Forum of New Cinema & Panorama (noncompetitive section of official program) known for strong programming of US ind. films. Both screen narrative, doc & experimental works. Forum specializes in avant-garde & political films (60 min. & up, 16mm & 35mm); also shows more commercial films. Panorama presents wide range of work from low-budget to more commercial ventures, incl. studio films (features & shorts under 15 min., 70mm, 35mm, 16mm). Other sections: Kinderfilmfest, 35mm & 16mm films over 59 min., produced for children; Retros; Lifetime Achievement tributes; New German Films, programmed w/in Forum line-up. European Film Market important meeting place for screenings & sales, w/ reps from over 40 countries. All entries must be produced in 12 mo. preceding fest & not released theatrically or on video in Germany.

ERRATA

For the **Sundance Film Festival**, competition films must be domestic premieres; up to two international festival dates are permitted. Also, the fax number listed in the Aug/Sept issue was incorrect; the correct number is (310) 394-8353.

In that same issue, the telephone and fax country codes for the **Leipzig International Festival for Documentary and Animated Films** was incorrect. The numbers are: (tel) 011 49 341 980 3921; (fax) 011 49 341 980 4828.

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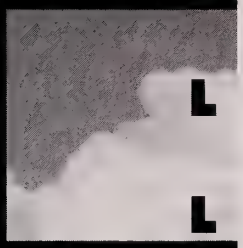
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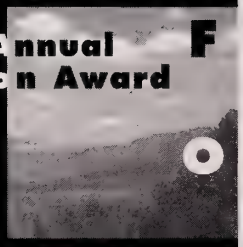
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CALL FOR ENTRIES

FESTIVALS

Deadline: late Nov. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. No entry fee. Fest address: Berlin Int'l Film Festival, Budapesterstrasse 50, 10787 Berlin, Germany; tel: 011 49 30 25 48 90 or 21 36 039; fax: 011 49 30 25 48 92 49; Forum: 011 49 30 25 48 92 42; fax: 011 49 30 26 15 025 or 25 48 92 46. US Forum rep: Gordon Hitchens, 214 W. 85th St., NY, NY 10024-3914; tel/fax: (212) 877-6856. In 1997, Independent Feature Project will be supporting "American Independents at Berlin" program. IFP plans to incorporate many services developed by NYFA during its many years of running "American Independents and Features Abroad," incl. market booth, message service for American filmmakers and companies, orientation for newcomers, and "Showcase of American Independent Films," to be presented in market. For info, call IFP at (212) 465-8200, ext. 216, Karen Schwartzman.

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CARTOONS & ANIMATED FILMS, February, Belgium. Since 1982, fest has been showcase for new, interesting works in animation, providing opportunity to be seen by Belgian film & TV distribs. Fest has support of Belgian TV (RTBF) & Pay TV Canal Plus Belgique. While noncompetitive, it is one of top 8 European animation fests involved in nominating films that compete for Cartoon d'Or. Close to 34,000 spectators attend hundreds of film premieres, retros & exhibits. Computer animation (incl. Pixel Ina prize-winners from Imagina), children's programs & short ind. animation are some fest highlights. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. No entry fee. Deadline: mid-Nov. Contact: Philippe Moins, dir., Brussels Int'l Festival of Cartoons & Animated Films, Folioscope a.s.b.l., Rue de la Rhetorique 19, 1060 Brussels, Belgium; tel: 011 322 534 4125; fax: 011 322 534 2279.

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 15-25, Belgium. Founded in 1972, fest is competitive event for general interest films, annually showing about 100 features & 120 shorts. European features & shorts eligible to compete for Crystal Star Award. Belgian shorts eligible to compete for Golden Iris Award. Sections incl. European Competition, Kaleidoscope of World Cinema, Belgian Focus w/ Nat'l Competition, Special Events & Tributes. Feature entries should be over 60 min. & shorts under 30 min. Formats: 35mm. No entry fee. Deadline: late Oct. Contact: Christian Thomas, managing dir., Brussels Int'l Film Festival, Chaussée de Louvain 50, 1033 Brussels, Belgium; tel: 011 322 218 53 33; fax: 011 322 218 18 60.

CINEMA DU REEL, Mar. 7-16, France. Founded in 1979, this is one of major int'l fests devoted to ethnological & sociological doc. Prestigious showcase held at the George Pompidou Centre in Paris, followed by Overview of Ethnographic Films at the Muse de l'Homme. Films & videos produced between Jan. 1 & Dec. 31 1996, not released theatrically in France or aired on French TV channel & unawarded at other French int'l fests eligible. Prefers works w/ cinematographic qualities & emphasizing filmmaker's point of view; informative docs or news reports not considered. Fest sections: Int'l Competition, French Panorama, Non-Competitive Program & Special Screenings. 1997 program dedicated to Baltic countries. Awards, decided by int'l jury, incl Grand Prix (50,000FF), short film prize (15,000FF), Joris Ivens

Prize to young filmmaker (15,000FF) & Multimedia Author's Society (SCAM) Prize (30,000FF). Jury of librarians & professionals award the Libraries Prize (30,000FF for films w/ French version or French subtitles) w/in int'l competitive section or French Panorama & Foreign Affairs Ministry awards Louis Marcorelles Prize. Detailed info (synopsis, technical details, etc.) must be sent to fest by deadline; no cassettes should be sent until requested; entry forms are only forwarded on receipt of preliminary instructions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. No entry fee. Deadline: early Nov. Contact: Suzette Glenadel, deleguée generale, Cinéma du Réel, Festival Int'l de Films Ethnographiques et Sociologiques, Bibliotheque Publicque d'Information-Centre Georges Pompidou, 19, rue Beaubourg, 75197 Paris Cedex 04, France; tel: 011 33 1 44 78 44 21; fax: 011 33 1 44 78 12 24.

CLERMONT-FERRAND INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, January, France. Clermont-Ferrand, important stop in int'l short film fest circuit, represents major int'l competition. Over 50 countries represented. Int'l competition provides spectacular view of worldwide cinematographic creation, screening over 70 films, many discoveries of filmmakers who go on to win major awards throughout world. Fest also boasts extremely large audiences of over 110,000, making it one of France's largest fests. Awards: Grand Prix (20,000 to director & Vercingtorix); additional donations & prizes may be awarded. Entries must be under 40 min. & completed after Jan. 1 of preceding yr. French subtitling strongly advised for selected prods. Directors invited to fest for at least 5 days; hotel accommodations & food allowance paid, as well as 450F toward travel. Fest also hosts Short Film market, which has amazingly large catalog listing over 2,000 prods, providing good overview of int'l short film prod. Buyers who have participated incl. Channel 4, Canal+, ZDF, BBC South, YLE, La Sept-Arte, France 2. 1,300 professionals view works in market & utilize catalog. 18 video units available to buyers for viewing approx. 2,000 tapes of shorts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: late Oct. Contact: Roger Gonin, fest director, Festival du Court Metrage de Clermont-Ferrand, 26, rue des Jacobins, 6300 Clermont Ferrand, France; tel: 011 33 73 91 65 73; fax: 011 33 73 92 11 93. After Oct. 19: tel: 011 33 473 91 65 73; fax: 011 33 473 92 11 93.

CRETEIL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Mar. 14-23, France. One of world's oldest fests of films by women & important showcase, now celebrating 19th yr. Held in Paris suburb of Créteil, fest annually attracts audiences of over 35,000, incl. filmmakers, journalists, distributors & buyers. Controversial & critical discussions traditionally part of proceedings. Sections: competition, retro of modern woman director, self-portrait of an actress, tribute to pioneer of women's film, young cinema, int'l program. Special events for 1997: new generation of French women filmmakers; women's films from Balkans. Competitive section selects 10 narrative features, 10 feature docs & 30 shorts. All films shown 3 times. Cash & equipment prizes: prix du public & Grand Jury prize, 6 other prizes (total 50,000FF). US preselection made by fest US rep Bérénice Reynaud. Films must be directed or codirected by women; completed since Mar. 1, 1995; not theatrically released in France, broadcast on French

FESTIVALS

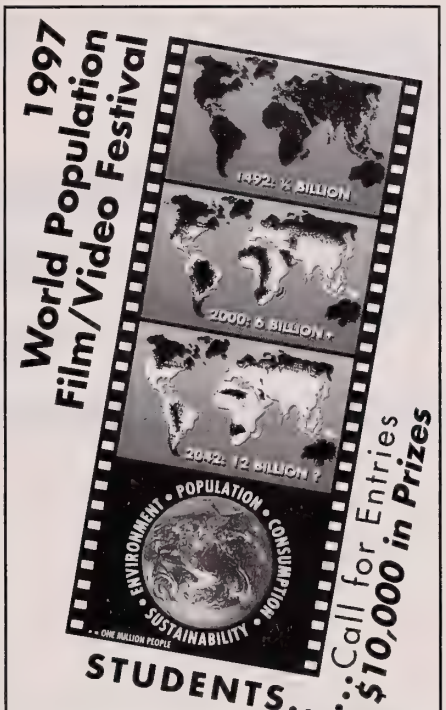
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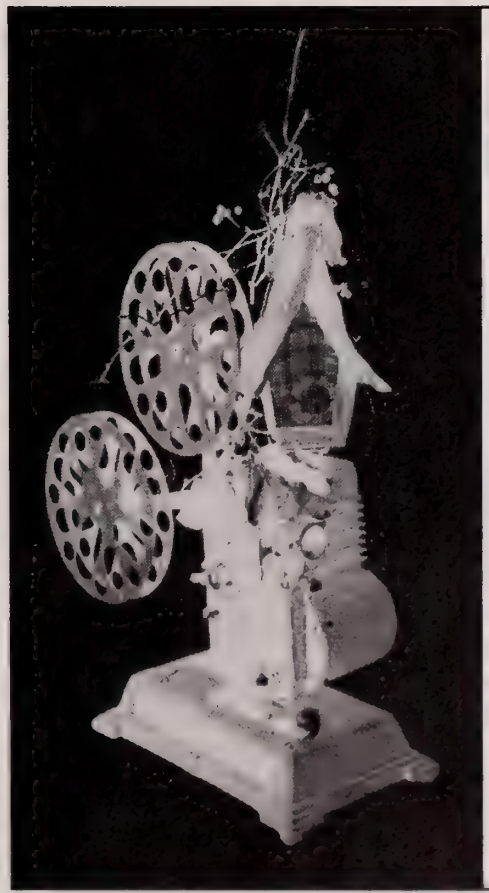
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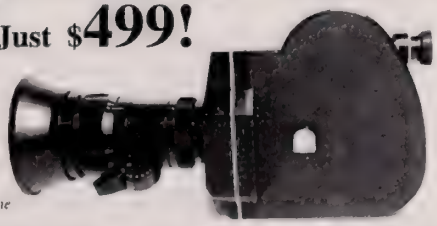
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PROFITABLE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES available for promising, low-budget independent feature, psycho thriller *Manchild*. Film is cast and crewed. Contact Billy Camp at (404) 349-2100 or write to Tambourine Productions, Box 90982, East Point, GA, 30364.

VISUAL ARTS DEPT. at UC San Diego seeks media artist, Ass't Professor, tenure-track, to entry Associate Professor w/ tenure. Teaching exp. & MFA or equivalency required. Deadline: Dec. 20. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, names of three refs & evidence of work in the field to: Kim MacConnel, Chair, Univ. of Cal, San Diego, Visual Arts Dept., 9500 Gilman Dr., La Jolla, CA 92093-0327

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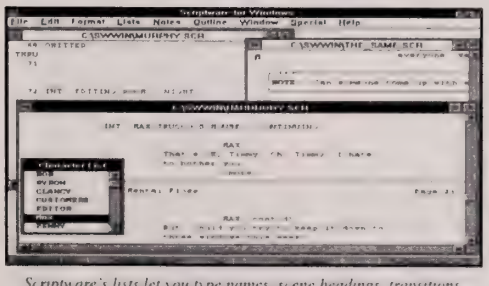
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Competitions

HIP FLICK'S SCREENWRITING COMPETITION accepting entries through Jan. 3. Entrants notified by March 31. Top 10 scripts receive cash awards. Winners eligible for possible production &/or option deal w/ company. Entry fee: $30. SASE to: Hip Flicks, Box 8867, Atlanta, GA 30306-08647; (770) 418-1293; hipflix@atl.mindspring.com; www.mindspring.com/hipflix.

SCREENWRITING COMPETITION sponsored by Scorpio Pictures seeks innovative, commercial scripts for film/TV. All genres. $500 cash prize w/ potential production options. $35 entry fee. Deadline Jan. 15. For rules, send SASE to: Scorpio Pictures, Box 1231, Sykesville, MD 21784-1231.

LATHAM FOUNDATION'S "SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE" VIDEO COMPETITION looking for videos completed & released btwn Jan. 1, 1990 & Dec. 31, 1996. Winners, announced in June, receive nat'l & local media attention, awards & publicity in a special issue of the *Latham Letter*, the foundation's quarterly newsletter. For entry forms, send SASE to: The Latham Foundation, Attn: Video Awards, Latham Plaza Building, Clement and Schiller Streets, Alameda, CA 94501; (510) 521-0920.

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST accepting scripts from throughout US. 5 to 6 winners receive $500 cash award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: On-going. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop National Contest, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

Conferences • Workshops

IFFCON '97: INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE 3-day intensive event (Jan. 10-12, 1997) in San Francisco, linking independent filmmakers searching for financing w/ int'l financiers, buyers & coproducers. Includes roundtables, private meetings & receptions. Limited to 60 participants, chosen through selection process. Deadline: Nov. 1. For info and applications, call (415) 281-9777; http:/www.virtualfilm.com/iffcon/

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL 1997 FILM & VIDEO PRODUCTION WORKSHOP. Intensive, hands-on, program begins Jan. 18 and is held every Wed. evening at Third World Newsreel offices for 8 months. Workshop focuses on skills to take a project from conception to completion. Emphasis on training and support of people of color who have limited financial resources and/or options within the mainstream. Each student will produce two individual projects: a 3/4" or Hi-8 video no longer than 10 min. and a 16mm non-sync film no longer than 5 min. Each student also required to serve as a technical crew member on a least six other projects. Prior film, video, or related experience strongly recommended but not required; self-initiative and a collaborative spirit is. The workshop costs $450 and selection is highly competitive. The 8 participants will be selected from a round of written applications and interviews. For an application, send a SASE to: Third World Newsreel, Production Workshop, 335 W. 38th St., 5th floor, NY, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277, ext. 301.

US/UK "INDIE" SEMINAR IN LONDON, held Nov. 21-22 as part of London Film Festival. An event to establih working relationships between US & UK filmmakers. Numbers strictly limited and seminar free of charge to invited participants. For further info: Hamish Summers, London Film Festival, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, England; tel: 44-171-8152324; fax: 44-171-6330786.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation and Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

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ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" okay, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX cable access venue for ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia & Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to: PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For more info contact: Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BURLE AVANT curating "530 Lines of Resolution," digital video art night at Den of Thieves, on Lower East Side in New York City. Video artists encouraged to submit works; no entry fee. Send VHS tapes under 15 min. by UPS or hand deliver to: 530 Lines of Resolution, c/o The Outpost, 118 North 11 St., 4th fl, Brooklyn, NY. 11211; (718) 599-2385

CHARISMATIC MASS TELEVISION seeks media art shorts for new monthly screening series. All genres accepted, any length. On-going deadline. Send artist statement, videotape & SASE. 3/4" preferred, Hi8 or 1/2" okay; returnable w/ SASE. Syracuse University, Art Media Studies, attn: Justine Wood, 102 Shaffer Art Bldg., Syracuse, NY 13244.

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DUTV-CABLE 54, progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

FILMMAKERS: Submit your shorts to *Show Your Shorts*, cable access program on Ch. 34 that airs first Sunday of every month at 4:30 p.m. Send VHS tapes no longer than 20 min. to: Catherine Delbuono, Box 9487 NY, NY 10011.

FROG PRODUCTIONS seeks student/ind. fims & videos for cable access TV show. Any length/genre, VHS preferred, 1/2" or 3/4" acceptable. Include info about work/artist, SASE if return desired. Fred W. DeVecca, Frog Prods, Box 158, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.

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videos (10 min. or less) for *Living with AIDS*, a half-hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, Living with AIDS Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8 min.) videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone # to: *In the Mix*, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

IND. FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, cable access show seeks student & ind. films & videos to give exposure. Send 3/4" format w/ paragraph about artist & work. The Independent Film & Video Showcase, 6755 Yucca St., #8, Hollywood, CA 90028, attn: Jerry Salata.

LA VOZ LATINA III: LATINA/O VIDEO ART FROM THE U.S.A. Looking for videotapes by Latinas/os (inclusive term that describes Chicanos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Caribbeans, Central/South Americans, etc., from the U.S.) for possible inclusion in curated program of videos to be presented at Festival Internacional de Video del Cono Sur taking place in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay and at Festival de Cine Latinoamericano in Italy in 1997. Deadline: Jan. 10, 1997. Send VHS preview w/ description, reviews, resume, bio & SASE for return of tape to: Luis Valdovino, Ass't Professor, Fine Arts Department, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309; (303) 492-5482; fax (303) 4924886.

LO BUDJIT FILMZ AND VIDEOS seeks submissions for *VHS or Less*, show focusing on camcorder movies. Embarass old friends, showcase your dusty old tapes. Large bi-coastal audience. Send to: Lo Budjit, 147 Ave A, Box1R NY, NY 10009 (212) 533-0866.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA COMPETITION looking for entries. The multimedia (CD-Roms only) deadline is Nov. 1, 1996 & film/video deadline is Dec. 1, 1996. For entry forms, call (510) 465-6885 or fax (510) 465-2835.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeks story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic *Explorer*, an award-winning multi-segment documentary series. To request an application for the CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call (202) 862-8637.

NEW DAY FILMS, premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic ind. film- & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distribution to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting appls for new membership. (914) 485-8489.

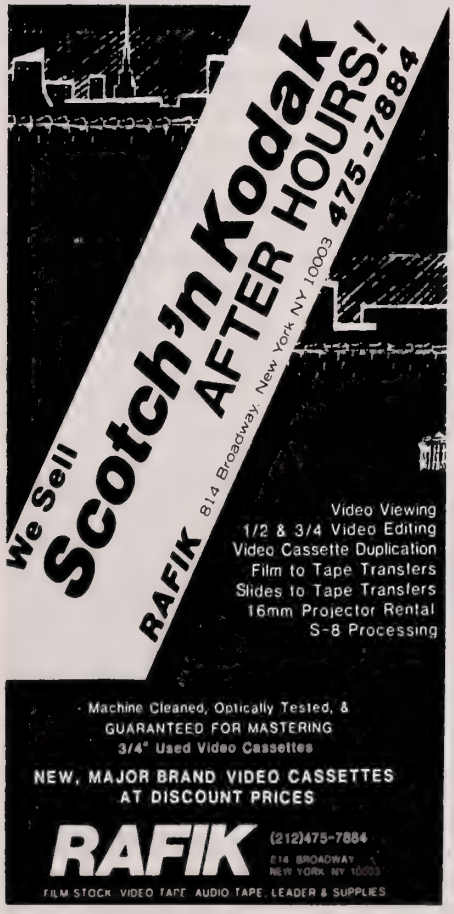
NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS, series broadcasting selected works statewide on public TV, seeks works of any genre (except corporate/instructional) produced by ind. artists currently residing in NC. Modest monetary compensation & telecast filmmak-

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er interview of artist for works selected. Entry fee: $15 for individuals, $5 for students & NC Media Arts Alliance members; separate fee for each submission. Contact Ellen Walters, NC Visions, Broadcasting/ Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg., UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax 5039; ncvision@hamlet.uncg.edu.

OCULAR ARCADE, new on ACTV in Columbus, OH, showcases ind. video (art, doc, experimental). Send Hi8, VHS, or 3/4" dub to: *Ocular Arcade*, D. Master, 135 West 1st Ave., Columbus, OH 43201.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/ Williamsburg areas of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Call or send SASE for info: Ocularis, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

PRODUCTION CO. WITH FINANCING seeking thriller/mystery scripts for feature film production. Send screenplays and/or synopses with SASE for return of material to: Off Pro Productions, Box 3947, Beverly Hills, CA 90212-0947.

SAN FRANCISCO SHORT FILMS, new organization dedicated to supporting short narrative film as an unique art form, seeks films under 35 min. for screening programs. Filmmaker must be resident of 415, 510, 408, 707, 916, or 209 area codes in Northern CA. Films must have been completed on or after Jan. 1, 1993. All formats okay, but submit preview in VHS to: SF Shorts, Box 424520, San Francisco, CA 94142. Submissions can also be brought to monthly meeting, first Thursday each month, 7 p.m., at Colossal Studios, 15th St. & DeHaro.

SAUCE GALLERY AND MOMENTA ART, two alternative spaces in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, currently accepting entries for on-going film/video series. Mission is to identify & exhibit compelling new work no longer than 30 min. All formats & genres. Submit in VHS, along w/ SASE & brief description of work, to: Sauce Gallery, 173A North 3rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; attn: Lisa Schroeder (718) 486-8992 or Laura Parnes (718) 782-8907.

SEEKING WORKS by ind. filmmakers. 16mm, 8mm & video for screening series in downtown Manhattan. Send VHS copy to Leslie Napoles, c/o CRC, 7th fl., 435 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast. Submit to: Edge TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

SUPER-8 FILM OPPORTUNITY: Send previews of short films no more than 20 min. on VHS or super-8 prints. No originals will be screened. Also enclose short bio, description, running time, filmography & stillss. Enclose $5, SASE & self-addressed stamped postcard. Send previews ASAP to: Barbara Rosenthal, 727 Ave. of Americas, NY, NY 10010-2712; (212) 924-4893.

THE KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Video Lounge, c/o Joanna Spitzner, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include self-addressed envelope w/ sufficient postage.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TV-1 PRODUCTIONS seeking footage on Cuba for upcoming doc. Every aspect of life in the island welcome. Formats: Hi8, SVHS, 3/4", Beta, DVD, 8mm & 16mm. Tapes returned. Payment negotiable. For info, contact: Marcos N. Suarez, 2102 Empire Central, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 357-2186.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for ind. filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" tape to: Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre and length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi 8 or 3/4" with description, name, phone & SASE to: VideoSpace, attn: general submissions, 9 Myrtle St, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

PUBLICATIONS

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 854-9577.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO, organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange, seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH GRANTS 1996, providing current info on nearly 6,000 funding sources, is now available. 1,224 pp. $135 plus 10% for shipping & handling, as well as sales tax in AZ & CA. To order, contact: The Oryx Press, 4041 North Central Ave., ste. 700, Phoenix, AZ 85012-3397; (800) 279-6799.

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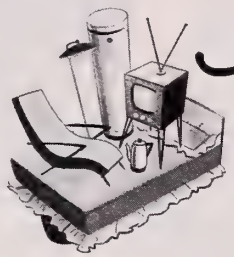
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MEDIANET: *A Guide to the Internet for Video and Filmmakers*. Available free at http://www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or e-mail rriddle@infi.net.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION offers *History for Hire: Using Cultural Resources as Film Locations*, ongoing series illustrating benefits & drawbacks of film prods in museums, private residencies & along historic streets. $6 per issue; 10+ copies at $3 plus shipping & handling. Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 673-4286.

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES' *30th Annual Report* available for free. Contains descriptions of Endowment programs and complete listing of all Endowment grants for fiscal year 1995. Report also available on NEH website: http: //www.neh.fed.us To request hard copies: NEH 1995 Annual Report, Room 402, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506; info@neh.fed.us.

PLUGGING IN: A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR MEDIA ARTISTS now available. 28-page guide w/ current info re: NY state media arts service organizations, equipment& public access centers & exhibitors as well as national listings for funding, festivals, residency programs, newletters & Internet resources. For copies, contact your local media arts organization or send $10 to: Media Alliance, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019.

SHORT VIDEO MOVIES: To finish our handbook on short video prod. process, we want to include your experiences w/ improvised scenarios or scripts, non-professionals or pros. Let's trade reels. Contact: David Shepherd, Group Creativity, 2 Washington Sq. Vill. #70, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-7830.

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Resources • Funds

APERTURE INC., new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers grant of $10,000 to first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. For info on 1996 Aperture Grant, send SASE to: Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on ongoing basis. Contact BFVF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax 536-3576; bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects,

A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problems; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

JAMES D. PHELAN ART AWARDS IN VIDEO available to California-born video artists whose work merits recognition for its creativity, innovation, and contribution to the language of video. Awards of $2,500 will be presented to each of three recipients in 1997. Deadline: Oct. 15. To apply, submit sample work (VHS, 3/4" or CD-Rom), bio, videography, copy of birth certificate & SASE to: Phelan Art Awards, BAVC, 1111 17th St., San Francisco, CA 94107. For more info, call: (415) 861-3282.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from: PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax 591-1114; piccom@elele.peacesat .hawaii.edu.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr: $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

STANDBY PROGRAM is nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to providing artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video post-prod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: The Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER dedicated to educators interested in using video technology as a learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen-pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact: Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

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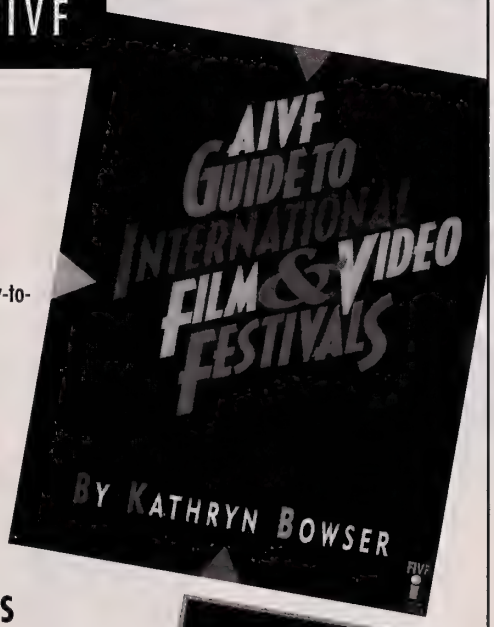
> **In making *Picture Bride* we turned many times to AIVF/FIVF publications for the facts on fundraising, production and distribution. Their books are up-to-date, well organized and accessible. Best of all, it's getting the 411 without the schmooze.**
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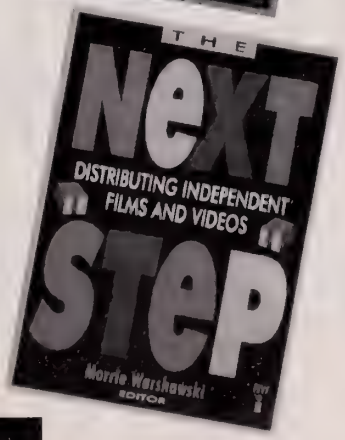
A must-read for film and video makers searching for the right distributor. The Distributors Guide presents handy profiles of nearly 200 commercial and nonprofit distributors, practical information and company statistics on the type of work handled, primary markets, relations with producers, marketing and promotion, foreign distribution and contacts. Fully indexed, this is the best compendium of distribution information especially tailored for independent producers available.



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MEMORANDA: cont'd from p. 64

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Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Denver, CO
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

Houston, TX:
When: Last Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: David Mendel, (713) 529-4185

Kansas City, MO:
When: 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact:: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Tucson, AZ:
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Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC:
Call for dates and locations
Contact: Sowande Tichawonna, (202) 232-0353

MEMORANDA

MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) met in New York on June 22-23, 1996. Attending were Debra Zimmerman (president and chair protem), Bart Weiss (vice president), Robert Richter (treasurer), Diane Markrow (secretary), Carroll Blue, Melissa Burch, Barbara Hammer, and Ruby Lerner (ex officio). Absent were Loni Ding, James Klein, Robb Moss, James Schamus, Norman Wang, and Susan Wittenberg.

The board adopted the following as AIVF's new mission statement:

The mission of AIVF is to foster independent producers and independent production in all forms and genres of moving image media and to provide information and a sense of community that sustains its members, encourages creative control, and invites a new generation of makers to independent mediamaking. By independent media, we mean self-generated productions of all genres and formats. AIVF is committed to advocating for diversity, freedom of expression, media literacy, and providing ongoing access to information in telecommunications and new technologies.

Director of Programs and Services Pamela Calvert reported that 24 candidates are running for 4 board seats this year, a new high.

The board discussed candidate ballot statements that weren't submitted by deadline and unanimously agreed that in the future the staff won't pursue board candidates who don't submit statements by the deadline and that the words "No statement submitted" will appear by their names on the ballot.

The board voted to add a student to the FIVF board to gain leadership development, fresh vision, energy, and access to colleges and universities, a central AIVF constituency. The board also agreed that students should be recruited to run for the AIVF board, and that the FIVF student board member will be appointed for a standard one-year term that begins with the January 1997 meeting.

Calvert reported on progress in developing the *Exhibitors' Guide*, for which Kathryn Bowser has amassed a database of over 700 listings.

The board discussed the nationwide growth of AIVF salons and established this set of structures and guidelines to ensure their longterm viability:

a) **Standard name**. All salons are to identify themselves by the standard name "AIVF Salon—[location]."

b) **Frequency**. Salons are to meet a minimum of three times per year, in either programmed or unprogrammed meetings.

c) **Liability**. Recognizing the limits of AIVF's liability insurance policy, salons must either take place in licensed premises or not serve alcohol, without exception.

d) **Support**. Salons may receive support for reimbursables to a maximum of $250 per fiscal year from AIVF.

e) **Grants.** Salons must secure a local nonprofit organization to umbrella any grant applications; no applications may be submitted naming AIVF/FIVF as the grantee.

f) **Chapter status**. Salons aren't chapters; however, the board will consider the idea of chapter creation at some point in

the coming year. Since a bylaw change would be necessary to allow chapter creation, no action will be taken on this before Fall 1997.

g) **Feedback.** Membership Coordinator Leslie Fields will convene an internet discussion of salon coordinators to discuss their needs for events where money changes hands, both from the standpoints of income allocation and risk of losses. Until the board forms a policy on this, salon events should be submitted to Fields for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Advocacy Coordinator Cleo Cacoulidis noted that letters of support had been sent on the subject of NEA reauthorization and funding, and on behalf of a Korean filmmaker who had been arrested. She sent packages of advocacy materials to regional media centers, including the videotape of the informational meeting held in New York this spring. An advocacy hotline is in the planning stages, projected for a September start-up.

Hammer reported on the Spectrum Bill debate, noting our position supports a spectrum auction with some proceeds set aside for public programming. She also noted the importance of communicating with the salons. The advocacy committee directed Cacoulidis to make NYC radio contacts to record and run PSAs on behalf of independent media, as well as create other press contacts so that AIVF is viewed as a source for quotes on issues affecting media and telecommunications policy.

Independent Editor Patricia Thomson reported on a reader's survey included in the summer ballot mailing, with follow-up phone calls planned. She said she was also interested in including issue-by-issue feedback questions on the questionnaires sent to renewing members, as well as placing a survey on our website. The cover price of the magazine increases to $3.95 with the August-September issue. Lerner noted that this year's figure for ad sales in the magazine was 7.5% higher and for newstand sales 20% higher than last year.

Lerner reported on the financial picture for FY 1997, which will be a year of transition for the organization. The board adopted the 1997 budget, which relies to a great degree on earned income. The organization's primary focus in the coming year will be marketing memberships and subscriptions to the faculty, bookstores, and libraries of the 600 U.S. colleges and universities with media programs. The board discussed the need for an individual fundraising initiative and FIVF board development.

The next meeting of the board was set for Saturday and Sunday, September 28-29.

MEMORANDA

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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BY PAMELA CALVERT

STAFF NEWS

This is the last "Memoranda" column appearing under Pamela Calvert's byline. After three eventful years as AIVF/FIVF's director of programs and services—developing initiatives ranging from salon creation to book publication—she has ventured back into the wilds of independent media as distribution coordinator for Judith Helfand's new documentary *A Healthy Baby Girl.*

EVENTS

ADVOCACY FORUM

AIVF will hold its second advocay forum in late October. Focus will be on the broadcast spectrum—will it be auctioned or given away? For the final date and time, contact Cleo Cacoulidis at (212) 807-1400 x 233.

OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

We're happy to announce that we've joined forces with production company NewCity's DocuClub to offer screenings of works-in-progress, and AIVF members are now eligible to submit nonfiction work to the DocuClub for screening. The screenings take place on the 1st Monday of the month in midtown Manhattan, and feature 1 or 2 works with discussion following. *Reservations necessary to attend screenings: (212) 753-9630 x 171.*

When: Monday, October 7, 7 pm

Where: NewCity Productions, 635 Madison Ave., #1101 (between 59 & 60)

To submit work: Susan Kaplan, (212) 753-1326

IMAGE INNOVATORS AT LINCOLN CENTER

AIVF members receive discounts on tickets to the second in the "Image Innovators" series at the Walter Reade Theater, dedicated to media artists who bring alternative views to the moving image. The fall program features winners of the 1996 **New Voices, New Visions International Digital Artistic Competition,** a commissioning program sponsored by Interval Research Corporation and the Voyager Company. **Bob Stein** of Voyager will present the program featuring the winning work. Some of the judges will also make appearances. This year's judges included **Lynda Barry, Mark Pellington, Ntozake Shange,** and **Laurie Anderson.** *For more information, call the Film Society of Lincoln Center, (212) 875-5610.*

When: Thursday, October 10, 7:30 pm

Where: Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center, New York

Price: $5 with AIVF member I.D.

Where: Walter Reade Theater

MEET AND GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF office. *Free; open to AIVF members only. Limited to 20 participants. RSVP required; (212) 807-1400 x 301.*

SUSAN WITTENBERG

Vice-President, Production and Programming, ***Ovation—The Arts Network***

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New Date! Tuesday, October 22, 6:30 pm

AIVF ON THE ROAD—PACIFIC NORTHWEST

To celebrate *The Independent*"s special regional issue on the Pacific Northwest, AIVF/FIVF Executive Director Ruby Lerner will attend events in that region in November. Watch this space in next month's *Independent* for more information.

AIVF FESTIVAL GUIDE ERRATA AND UPDATES

Alamo American Film Competition for Students
reorganized as American Film Competition for Students
1136 Soria Avenue
Orlando, FL 32807
Call for entries will be issued late 1996 at the earliest, with deadline in 1997.
Contact: Jeff Maynard, *tel/fax:* (407) 380-6488

American International Film and Video Festival
Telephone number is out of service; no further information is available at this time.

Angers European First Film Festival
fax: 011 331 42 71 47 55

Belfort International Festival of New Directors
tel: 011 33 1 48 73 42 48
fax: 011 33 1 48 77 18 24

Charleston International Film and Video Festival/Worldfest—Charleston
tel: (713) 965-9955

Creteil International Festival of Films by Women
U.S. contact tel: (805) 255-1050 x 2421
U.S. contact fax: (213) 665-3440

Hamptons International Film Festival
tel: (516) 324-4600

Project Black Cinema International Film Festival
tel: (941) 953-6424

Visions of U.S. Video Contest
tel: (213) 856-7707
fax: (213) 462-4049

If you discover an error or change in our *Festival Guide*, please call us so we can publish it in the magazine and include the information in updates we publish periodically.

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

New York-based **United Digital Artists** is offering AIVF members a 10% discount on their entire roster of cutting-edge classes in new technologies, including Imaging, Design/ Publishing, Video/ Presentations/3D, Multimedia, and the Internet. This offer cannot be combined with other discounts. *United Digital Artists, (212) 777-7200; fax: (212) 777-7222; www.uda.com. Contact: Brenda Webb.*

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

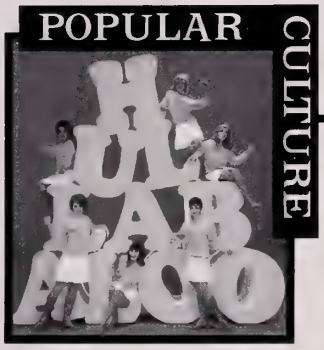
This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

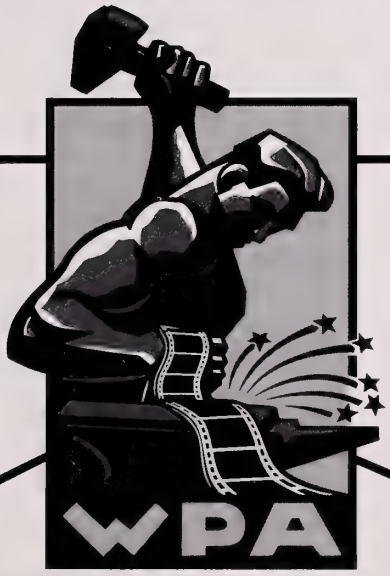
Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6 p.m.
Where: Border Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

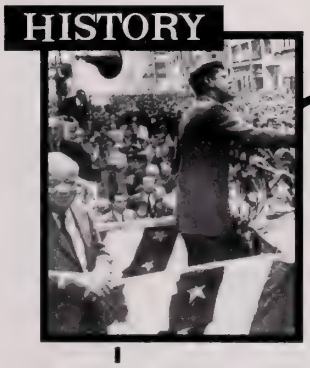
Continued on p. 62

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January 1, 1996

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UNCONVENTIONAL COVERAGE

Media Activists Go Where Networks Fear To Tread

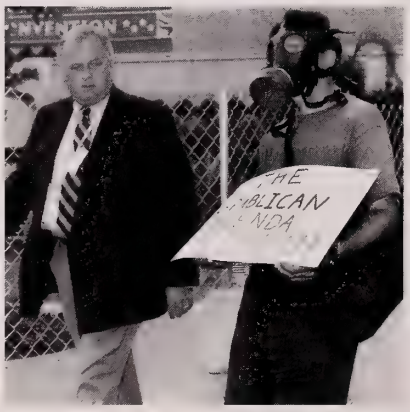
EDITED BY DANA HARRIS

DID YOU CATCH THE PROTESTS ON THE STREETS OF SAN Diego and Chicago during the national Republican and Democratic conventions? Not if, you got your coverage from the major networks, which is why independent media groups in both cities went after those stories and produced *Breaking Conventions* and *Off The Record*.



"The mainstream media covered everything inside the convention, but ignored what was happening on the streets," says Joan Sekler of the Los Angeles Alternative Media Network (LAAMN), who coordinated dozens of videographers, reporters, and internet activists in San Diego and Chicago. LAAMN's website also provided convention updates.

It's not that all of mainstream media swallowed the parties' lines whole: much to-do was made when Ted Koppel walked out of the Republican National Convention in disgust, calling it an "info-convention," and one engineer reported overhearing CNN reporters Bobbi Batista and Wolf Blitzer poke fun at the Republican Party elite off-camera. Still, the parties' "other" stories never seemed to make the major networks' cut.



"They focused on the shallowest, silliest aspects of the convention and never talked about the issues," says Chicago journalist Chris Giovanis. "They complained about the content inside, but they refused to go outside to listen to what the people were saying."

There was also evidence of self-censorship and tight controls in the mainstream media. "Wire service photographers told me that they were strictly forbidden to keep any photos for themselves or to do any independent shooting," says freelance photographer and LAAMN member Slobodon Dimitrov. "I've never seen anything like that before."

Those restrictions weren't a problem for LAAMN's camera talent, who ranged from seasoned professionals to newcomers with brand new Hi-8 cameras. To put the footage to use, Sekler rented space in San Diego in a former Carnation Milk factory with other local media activists. With help from volunteers (and $5,000 in last-minute grants), she set up videotape logging stations with borrowed furniture and TV monitors. Sekler then bicycled the tapes to editor Che Che Martinez at Pellman studios, where owner Glen Shoemaker had donated his Betacam editing bay for the week.

Martinez averaged three hours sleep a night as he cobbled together sequences on immigration, the religious right, labor, women's issues, and gay rights. The final product was a 57-minute video called *Breaking Conventions: The Unofficial Coverage of the Republican National Convention.* After San Diego, Sekler flew to Chicago and helped coordinate Democratic coverage with Kate Kirtz of Countermedia, a group of 25 media activists who worked out of an office donated by the Worker's Pool. Kirtz and her associate producer, Alan Siegel, edited additional footage from Hi-8 videographers and came up with a 90-minute show called *Off the Record*. DeeDee Halleck of Deep Dish TV arranged feeds to 150 cable access stations across the country, and Free Speech TV of Boulder, Colorado digitized two half-hour segments from San Diego and made it available on their website.

Chicago was a tough city for both protesters and media activists. While San Diego's convention center is near trendy restaurants and the Pacific Ocean, Chicago's United Center stands in the middle of a working-class ghetto. Chicago officers also tailed and raided Countermedia's van, confiscating its contents and arresting six videographers the officers called "activists posing as journalists."



Scenes from the conventions. All courtesy LAAMN

Both conventions left media activists convinced that their role will expand in the future as the networks' corporate nooses tighten. "We were doing things the networks should have been doing and weren't," says Olivia Olea, a Chicana documentary filmmaker. "They censored themselves. They served the status quo and refused to take risks."

To order *Breaking Conventions* and *Off the Record*, write Deep Dish TV, 39 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012 or call (212) 473-8933.

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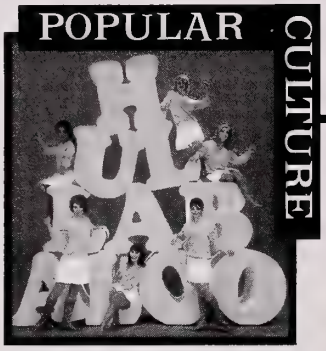
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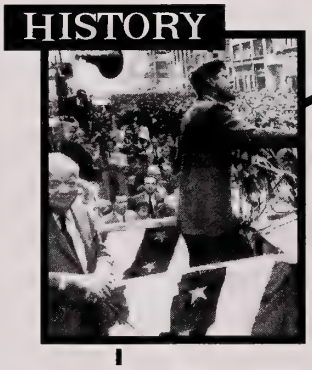
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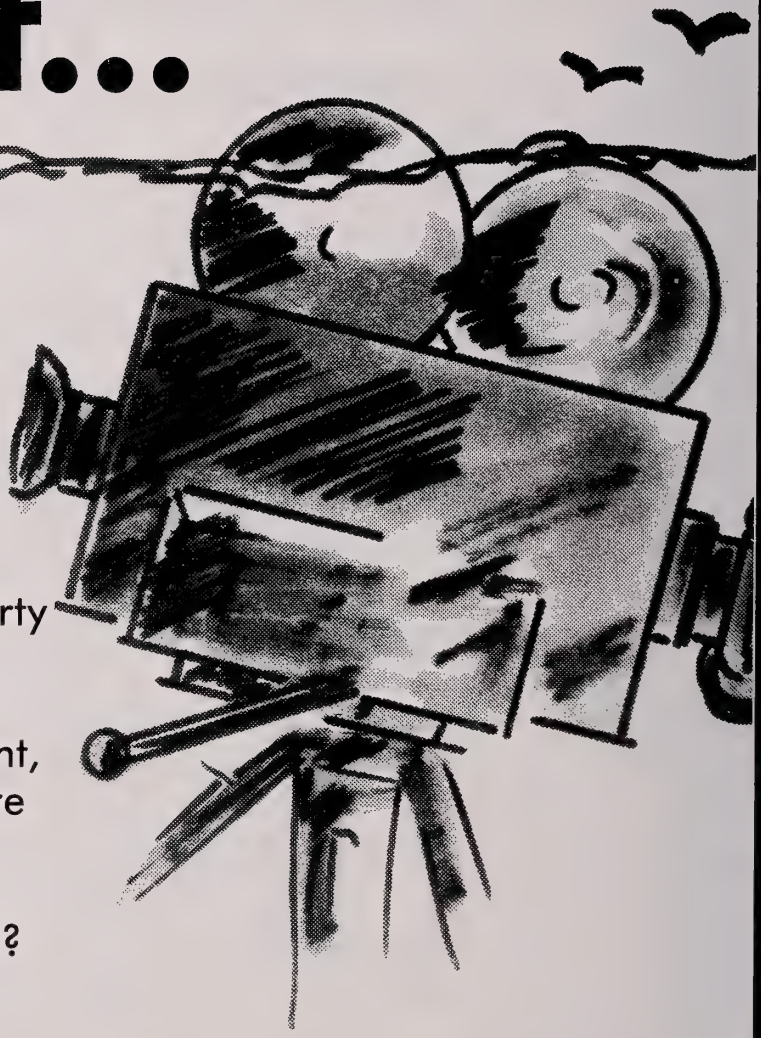
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NORTHERN EXPOSURE

BY ROBIN REIDY OPPENHEIMER, GUEST EDITOR

"Power lies with the people who tell the rest of the world what to think. Since the invention of television, that power has been invested in New York, Los Angeles, and Washington. But if—as Microsoft chairman Bill Gates seems to believe—it's now up for grabs in the demotic babble of the Internet, then Seattle may be the city to grab it."

— from "Seattle Reigns" by Jerry Adler, *Newsweek*, May 20, 1996

Welcome to the future. The Pacific Northwest is where the North American continent ends and the worldwide virtual community begins.

Even if you've never visited this corner of the country, you've no doubt experienced it—think *Twin Peaks*, *Northern Exposure*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, and look around at the ubiquitous coffee bars and outcroppings of grunge culture.

If you have been out here, especially in the summer, then you probably have plans to come back. The heady brew of natural beauty, eclectic urban culture, and the buzz of caffeine and multimedia are truly addictive.

This regional spotlight includes Vancouver alongside Seattle, Portland, and Olympia. Each city has a unique media arts community, and they're far enough apart to rarely mix audiences or artists and to have evolved their own cultural microclimates. Canada has a long history of supporting the media arts, and its legacy of media arts centers, media schools, and incredible community of film and video artists is not sufficiently known in the U.S. I hope this issue of *The Independent* begins to connect these parallel universes and encourage dialogue within our own region.

Like everywhere else, life as an independent mediamaker in the Northwest is a constant struggle. We have always lacked many of the "natural" resources taken for granted in other parts of the country—namely, government funding and good film schools. But now that the political winds are shifting and drying up arts funding across the continent, the Northwest's long-time survival strategies in a lean environment could prove to be a beacon of hope.

Finally, the future of all our media artforms is digital. While, as Adler notes, Microsoft may be scrambling for power, there are others in this area who have plunged into the digital world for different reasons. I hope these articles about multimedia will contribute to the growing awareness of and appreciation for maverick artist/programmers who explore computers as an exciting tool for cultural production, including mediamaking and distribution.

Perhaps you'll be inspired to visit our corner of the world, either in person or on-line. There's always room—but not many jobs—for a few more media artists out here.

Robin Reidy Oppenheimer is a consultant in the converging areas of art, education, and technology. Her recent projects include the catalog for the Washington State Arts Commission's Video Art Collection to be placed in all Washington public schools this fall. She is the former director of 911 and IMAGE FilmVideo Center in Atlanta.

Photo from *Oh, How Can I Keep by Singing?*, by Melissa Young

The Trends Start Here

From junkie loggers to double decaf lattes, Pacific Northwest filmmakers take inspiration anywhere they can find it.

BY NOELIA SANTOS



Photo by Charles Peterson, from Doug Pray's *Hype!*, courtesy Cinepix Film Properties

LATTE LAND. SOFTWARE CENTRAL. Birthplace of Grunge and the Voluntary Simplicity movement. Haven for environmentalists. Home of the SuperSonics or the Mariners, depending on your preference. Some of those on the outside looking in have tried (often in vain) to capture the unique essence of Seattle, as Hollywood did with moderate success in *Singles* and *Sleepless in Seattle*. And while *Frasier* has contributed to the name and mystique of this city, the sitcom is filmed on a Hollywood soundstage with an inaccurate skyline as a backdrop.

It's the local film- and videomakers whose work best reflects the cultural trends spawned in this area. Much of the work is documentary, dealing with everything from grunge to logging to genetic engineering to Native American fishing rights. Some of it is whimsical, such as the newly emerged "coffee genre" (including films like *Double Lowfat Latte Love*, by Jonas Batt, and Gerald Donahoe's *From Afar*, which uses coffee as a comic device to bring lovers together and keep them apart). As they take an incisive look at the world around them, Seattle-area filmmakers create a cinematic picture of life in the Northwest.

Back to basics

"Environment" is a word that's difficult to escape here. There are constant reminders, from the majestic Mt. Rainier that towers above Seattle, to the logging trucks that constantly roll by (stacked with old-growth trees), to the recycling bins found in every corner of the city.

The Northwest was cleared by loggers and pillaged by miners and fur-traders, and their descendents are now paying the price. Brion Rockwell's narrative short *Where the Air Is Cool and Dark* portrays the wasted, apathetic lives of junkie loggers, whose spoiling of their environment parallels the spoiling of their own bodies.



Vicki Robbin and Joe Dominguez, Seattle residents and authors of the best-selling bible of the Voluntary Simplicity Movement, *Your Money or Your Life*. Documentarian John DeGraaf examines the message of this movement in three films. Courtesy filmmaker

And Portland's Green Fire Productions created a scathing expose of the Northwest timber companies in *logs, lies and videotape*.

However, many locals are now trying to adopt the enviro-consciousness of the Native Americans who originally inhabited the land. This helps explain the local trait of muted dress —Seattleites are a low-key breed who opt for earth tones (lots of brown) in their clothing as well as in their famed beverages. One native inhabitant suggested that in deference to Seattle's spectacular natural beauty, people show reverence to the backdrop by dressing in earthy colors.

It's not surprising, then, that what's being called the "Voluntary Simplicity Movement" emerged in the Northwest. Sometimes referred to by the more business-like term "downshifting," Voluntary Simplicity has been named and popularized by a wave of hard-working professionals who have chosen to slow down, use fewer resources and less energy, and lead a less consuming—and in turn, more satisfying—life.

John de Graaf is a Seattle documentarian exploring this Northwest trend, which started with books like *Your Money or Your Life*, published in 1992. He has completed two major features on the subject and is currently seeking funding to finish a third. *Running Out of Time*, co-produced with Vivia Boe in 1994 and broadcast twice on PBS, is an insightful analysis of time pressures in our society and workplace. Narrated by Scott Simon of National Public Radio, the film explores the hazardous effects of overwork and stress and looks at some eerie side effects, especially as they exist in the extreme in Japan, where people routinely die of *karoshi*—death from overwork. *Affluenza: The Cost of High Living* (tentatively scheduled to be broadcast this spring on PBS) exposes the excesses of our country's standards of living and habits of waste. *How to Live Better on Less*, currently in development, reiterates Voluntary Simplicity's message to the over-worked: too much work and hustle is not good for your health.



The effects of genetic engineering and the loss of biodiversity are on the minds of the filmmakers behind *Genetic Time Bomb* (above) and *Risky Business* (below). Courtesy filmmakers

"I've always felt that we should live more simply," says de Graaf. "One of the movement's centers is Seattle, the unofficial headquarters of Voluntary Simplicity. So I guess I'm in the right place."

Ironically, de Graaf seems to be one of the hardest-working filmmakers in the Northwest. His 15-plus years of producing documentaries with support from public television stations like Seattle's KCTS and Portland's KOPB qualify him as a native industry professional. His environmental documentaries like *Genetic Time Bomb* (1994), which reported on the alarming loss of biodiversity in agriculture, have won awards from the likes of the National Educational Film Festival, the Environmental Education Film Festival, and the Washington Press Association. Says De Graaf , "Documentaries about these subjects tend to be universally gloomy; they give you a clear view of what's wrong, without giving any sense of what people can do to make it better." Citing his *For Earth's Sake*, which profiles leading American environmentalist David Brower, DeGraaf says, "I've always wanted to give examples of people who, often at great cost to their own lives, stuck their necks out and made everyone's lives richer because of it."



Earth now

Other Northwest filmmakers are similarly concerned with the environment and the consequences of modern man's meddling. The risks of genetically engineered crops and animals are explored by Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin in *Risky Business: Biotechnology and Agriculture*.

Still others look at environmental issues through the prism of the first environmentalists, Native Americans. One of the most noteworthy documentarians in this department is Sandra Sunrising Osawa, a member of the Makah tribe from Neah Bay in northwest Washington. Osawa, continues to rack up awards for her films, which document the experience of tribes from all around the country.

Airing nationally on the PBS series *P.O.V.* in 1995, Osawa's *Lighting the Seventh Fire* exposed the Chippewa treaty-rights controversy that stirred up blatant and ugly racism in northern Wisconsin in 1983.

Local fishermen and hunters, convinced their resources would be depleted by competition from native spear-fishers, responded with a furious backlash when century-old, federally sanctioned treaties gave back to the Chippewa their original land and fishing rights.

Osawa's motivation for documenting this conflict arose out of her own experience with the Makah's fight to maintain their treaty rights in Washington state. Osawa's grandfather, Chief Jongie Claplanhoo, lost his three scaling schooners through government confiscation. Joslyn Howard, Osawa's co-producer in their company Upstream Productions, explains how throughout the history of native treaty rights in Washinton and Oregon, those rights are "being denied consistently by the state, and every time [these conflicts] are taken to the federal level, the Indians win." Upstream's current work-in-progress, *Usual and Accustomed Places*, aims to explore this tug-of-war history.

"They're honor videos for me," says Osawa, whose work reflects culture in which traditions of knowledge and spirit are passed down from elder to grandchild, "because it's my way of expressing a deep appreciation for what strong, often unknown Indian people are doing."



Sandy Osawa's *Lighting the 7th Fire* chronciles the Chippewa Indian's struggle to restore a centuries-old spearfishing tradition. Courtesy *P.O.V.*

The music legacy

Long before grunge put Seattle on the map, the city gave birth to musical giant Jimi Hendrix. Local directors/producers Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin (whose production company Moving Images has produced a number of documentaries, including the critically acclaimed AIDS video project *In the Midst of Winter*), produced *Rainy Day, Dream Away* in 1985. Described by Young and Dworkin as "an impressionistic interlude" with a group of Northwest artists, this 30-minute piece portrays them at work on creating a bronze bust of their hometown hero.

Ten years later, the current Seattle music scene is played out on screen in Maria Gargiulo's debut feature film *The Year of My Japanese Cousin*. A favorite at last year's Seattle International Film Festival, the film presents an age-old story of rivalry, artistic ambition, and emotional maturation—all set to the tune of local bands. Selene Vigil of Seattle's 7 Year Bitch plays Stevie, the lead singer in a mediocre Seattle punk band who must cope with an unexpectedly talented visitor from Japan. Director of photography Lulu Gargiulo (herself a member of Seattle band The Fastbacks) shot a fast-paced, roving-camera-style feature which has a rapid-fire editing that recalls the feel of a music video.



Before *Hype!*, there was *The Year of My Japanese Cousin*, a dramatic feature set to the tune of local bands. The lead singer from Seattle's 7 Year Bitch plays the lead singer in a mediocre punk group. Courtesy filmmaker

But the film that best captures the talent and energy of Seattle's music scene is *Hype!* Filmed over a three-and-a-half year period, *Hype!* was the brainchild of producer Steve Helvey. He and director Doug Pray met while attending film school at UCLA. Pray, a native of Madison, Wisconsin, had previously gone to college with members of the Young Fresh Fellows and had stayed friends with them ever since and visited Seattle whenever he could, soaking up the scene from the bands' inside view. Helvey's interest in documenting the Seattle musical explosion (which, for him, recalled childhood memories of the sixties' cultural revolution in the Bay Area) led him to ask for Pray's help. The idea was initially met with much skepticism.

"At first, Doug knew how tired everyone had grown of cameras and the whole 'scene' idea," says Helvey. "He almost refused to ask his friends if we could film them. Initially, a lot of people were very hesitant about talking to 'these guys from Hollywood' coming up to film their scene. But we shot some concerts, put together a six-minute trailer, and they were really impressed." Word of mouth spread on the quality of the concert footage and the sound reproduction (all the music was digitally recorded live on 24 tracks). That and the earnestness of the two heavily-in-debt filmmakers eventually won over their subjects, and more and more bands began to offer access to their shows and open up in interviews.

"It made perfect sense to interview these bands that I knew and liked," explains Pray. As a non-native intimately familiar with the true character of the Seattle music scene, he was able to present an accurate portrait of a group of people whose self-

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effacing nature would never allow them to take on such a project themselves. "As I've said before, nobody on the outside of Seattle *could* have made this film; nobody from Seattle *would* have made this film" because of Northwesterners' self-effacing sensibility.

Hype! started out as an attempt simply to film the bands that were part of the Seattle music scene, including everyone from Gas Huffer to Pearl Jam. But the picture quickly snowballed. *Hype!* winds up presenting a fascinating case-study of the media bandwagon and the process by which it can turn its pet subject into a mass culture phenomenon. It also reveals how off-base this media portrayal can be.



The Mono Men offer their take on the mass-media circus surrounding grunge bands like theirs in *Hype!* *Courtesy Cinepix Film Properties*

"What I understood the scene to be was an incredibly friendly, incredibly humorous, self-deprecating environment," says Pray. "The 'other' side had this grunge definition [of Seattle] as being really dark, self-serious, with long hair... There's a lot of that, but there's also a lot of humor. It seems that side of it was totally missed by the media."

When the film opens this month, the big test will be to see whether the media machine that created grunge will "get it." But whatever the case, the film's hardest test has already been passed—the screening for featured bands. "I was completely terrified, but everyone came out really positive," says Pray. "Everyone in Seattle has their opinion of the film; some of them are negative, but I love that! Nobody's gonna say, 'It's great!' to me—that wouldn't be the Northwest style."

Helvey is proud of the community's overall support. and believes it's owed to a number of decisions: "One, we listened to everyone. Two, we didn't use any voiceover narration, no outside pundits' interpretation of what went on. It's all members of the community," says Helvey. "Three, the bands chosen are representative of the scene. And four, the quality of the music and the filming were really appreciated by the bands. Overall, the tone of the film rings true."

The film scene

As the keystone to the Northwest filmmaking arch, which extends from Vancouver to Olympia to Portland, Seattle is at the center of a lot of regional filmmaking. Like elsewhere in the country, it has two strands—commercially oriented work and the more-intrepid independent production. "What runs through most [Seattle-made films] I'm seeing is that people are working within their means," states Joel Bachar, a videographer who runs the monthly screening series *Independent Exposure*. "That means: working alone, working in the medium they know.

"They're covering what surrounds them, what their life is," he explains. "Seattle is a grey, indoor, coffee-drinking kind of place. The filmmakers here are creating films that some would call self-indulgent, but are really just diaries or journals of their own lives."

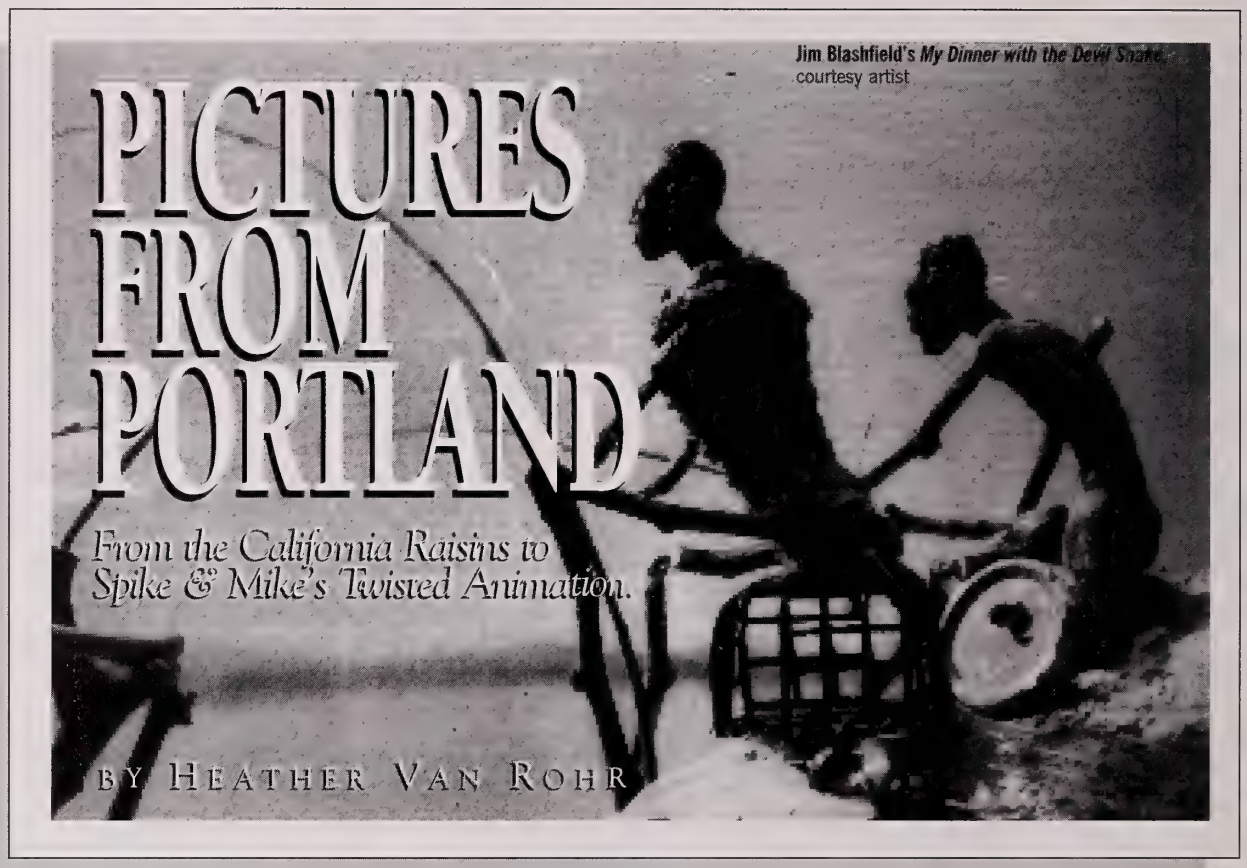
Getting these lone wolves together to create more of a cohesive film scene is something the local media centers and mini-festival curators strive to do. They increasingly pool resources, share ideas, and coordinate schedules, all in the name of establishing a tight, supportive film and media community. The recently formed Seattle Independent Film and Video Consortium is an example of this networking effort. Himself a key member, Bachar explains that the consortium's aim is to "establish a presence in the Seattle community as a viable network of otherwise unrepresented programs and artists."

Others take a different tack. "I think the only way that a film community outside of Los Angeles could ever viably survive as a community—not just as a bunch of unrelated individuals making movies—is if it really strives to do amazing work," says Jeremy Hook, who, with Deborah Girdwood, runs the nonprofit postproduction studio Wiggly World, which currently hosts 10 filmmakers who use their flatbed editing suite at no cost. Called the "Out of the Can" project, this phenomenal opportunity is subsidized by the King County Arts Commission.

Currently, the big challenge is to see whether Seattle will support local filmmakers as well as it has local theater groups, musical trends, and arts endeavors. Hook admits some problems in local/national perceptions will have to be ironed out first. "Most people here think of [film] as a commercial venture because that's the way it is in this country. But if only you could get the backers of the cultural communities in Seattle used to the idea that [film] was another art form you support..."

"It's not like you're giving money to these people who want to run off to Hollywood and become millionaires," says Hook. "There could actually be a vibrant, artistic community here. I think it's possible."

Noelia Santos is a freelance writer living in Seattle whose work also appears in the Seattle Weekly.



PICTURES FROM PORTLAND

From the California Raisins to Spike & Mike's Twisted Animation.

BY HEATHER VAN ROHR

"ONE FOOT IN ART AND ONE FOOT IN COMmerce"—that's how Portland animator Jim Blashfield positions his own work, but that could also describe the animation scene he's been part of for more than 20 years. As the home of the California Raisins and their creators at Will Vinton Productions, as well as numerous independent producers, Portland is now a commercial animation center. But it's the ongoing tradition of experimental and personal work that keeps the animation community vital. The Northwest Film Center has been educating animators for roughly 25 years. Though many other institutions and grassroots groups that supported independents in the '70s and '80s disappeared, new ones formed, including a local chapter of the international animation society ASIFA. What follows are sketches of some of the artists who have contributed to Portland's rich animation history.

Independent filmmaking was thriving in Portland when **Bob Gardiner** and **Will Vinton** made their clay animation film *Closed Mondays*, which follows a wino through a closed museum as the art comes to life before his bleary eyes. For local filmmakers, it was a moment of great possibility when this little movie, shot in a basement with borrowed equipment, won the 1974 Academy Award for Best Animated Short.



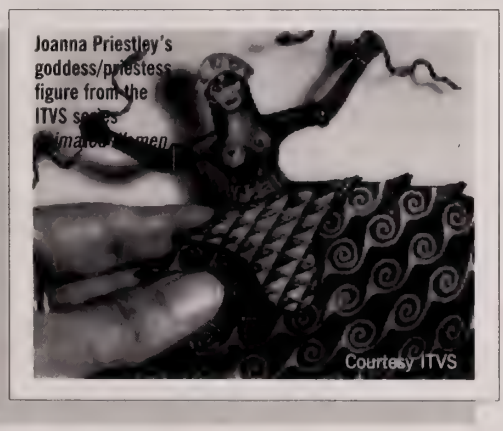
In the late '70s, **Roger Kukes** co-founded the Animation Collective, a loose group of artists who organized screenings of contemporary animation, worked on each other's films and shared equipment. Kukes also taught at the Northwest Film Center, where his emphasis on technically simple methods of creating sophisticated images inspired a number of animators still working in Portland today. Rose Bond studied with him in 1980. She says, "Roger taught people alternative ways to make films. You had Joanna Priestly drawing on index cards, or doing stuff with clay, people working with sand. Nobody did cel animation. You only used nontraditional ways to make film. It was this whole other world, a whole new way to make art." (For more on Bond, see interview on page 20.)

Joan Gratz came out of the same architecture program as Will Vinton and worked at his studio for 10 years before becoming an inde-

pendent commercial producer in the late '80s. Gratz's technique of painting with clay is striking for its rich palette, swirling surfaces and dramatic compositions. Her Academy Award-winning 1993 film, *Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase*, traces the history of Western painting from Mona Lisa to pop art, emphasizing visual echoes between the images as they metamorphose into one another.



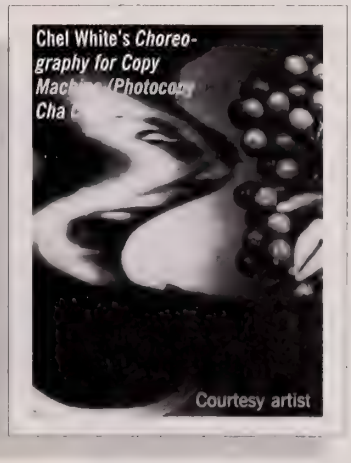
Jim Blashfield's method is to "take the world apart and put it back together again." Mixing photo collage, sculpture and live action, he creates surreal spaces strewn with cultural debris. A member of the Animation Collective in the '70s, his career took a turn in 1983 when he sent his film *Suspicious Circumstances* to The Talking Heads, who asked him to make a video for "And She Was." Since then he has been a prolific and innovative producer of commercials and music videos, but he is critical of the world of commerce. "Advertising," he says, "is dangerous to creativity."



Perhaps no Portland animator has stayed truer to the spirit of experimentation than **Joanna Priestly**. She turned her art background to animation while she was working at the Northwest Film Center in the early '80s. Since then she has taught around the country and shown her work in festivals and museums worldwide. Viewed together, her films are a circus parade of childlike line drawings, cartoon figures, expressionistic sets, candy, raw meat and more. Whether she is contemplating women and spirituality (*She-Bop*), or the paradoxes of relationships (*All My Relations*), her approach is both whimsical and deeply engaged. Her current project deals with the deaths of several friends and family members and will incorporate trash and bones collected during an artist residency in the New Mexico desert.



When **Chel White** arrived in Portland in 1985, he got to know the independent filmmaking community through the Media Project, a nonprofit exhibition and distribution center. Since then, in addition to producing commercial animation, he has worked on Gus Van Sant's films as both an actor and a technician; for *My Own Private Idaho* he created the evocative image of a barn crashing to the ground. White sees his personal work gradually evolving from animation to live-action fiction films. The images in his current project, a meditation on romantic obsession, have a ghostly sensuality, achieved by painting and reshooting black-and-white home movie-style footage.



Many animators turn to commercial work to support their art, but **Webster Colcord**'s art evolved partly as a reaction against his commercial work. He started doing clay animation at Vinton's when he was 18, and was soon making films for the "Sick and Twisted" crowd as a rebellion against the relentless happiness of characters like the California Raisins. Since going independent he has made commercials, animated parts of *James and the Giant Peach*, and continued with his own projects. His drawn films have a goofy, comic-book style, while his 3-D work tends toward the macabre, featuring skeletal creatures in decaying environments. Asked what keeps him animating in Portland, Colcord rattles off, "the community, the quality of life, the rain — the way things rot."

Heather von Rohr is a writer and filmmaker living in Portland, Oregon.

See the Drawings Move

An Interview with Rose Bond



Veteran animator Rose Bond (below) and frames from her paint-on-film animation *Macha's Curse*.

ANIMATED FILM OFTEN EMPHASIZES SCULPTURAL OR textural qualities, but Rose Bond's technique of drawing directly on clear 35mm film stock yields an image that is purely cinematic. Her rich, watery drawings have the luminosity of painted glass. Although her technique is cameraless, she incorporates the gestures of pans, tilts and an impossibly mobile hand-held camera. Her stories unfold as a visceral flow of motion.

Born in Canada, Bond moved to Portland with her family as a child and later graduated from Portland State University with a degree in drawing and painting. She began to develop her direct animation technique in a class at the Northwest Film Center in 1980. For Bond, "seeing the drawings move" was a revelation. After receiving an MFA in filmmaking from the School of the Art Institute in Chicago, she returned to Portland. Currently on a leave of absence from her job as an administrator with the public school district, she is devoting her time to teaching and filmmaking.

Despite the handmade aesthetic of her films, Bond is interested in what technology can bring to animation. She is working on a computer—scanning in drawings and applying color—to develop imagery for her next project, and she recently finished animating images from cave drawings for a travelling multimedia installation about early encounters between Salish Indians and Jesuit priests.



Over the years, Bond's work has focused increasingly on social and political issues, often veiled in myth. In 1995 she completed *Dierdre's Choice*, the third film in a trilogy of Celtic tales about lusty women bucking the systems that hold them down. With funding from the NEA, Bond travelled to Ireland to find voice-actors and meet with feminist scholars. *Dierdre's Choice* has won awards at a number of festivals, including Black Maria and the Chicago International Film Festival.

Since she began making films, Bond has been actively involved with the Portland animation community. She is president of the NW chapter of ASIFA, an international animation society, and teaches at the Northwest Film Center. When we met, she had just finished making two animated PSAs—*Girl Power* and *Fight Girl Poisoning*—with a group of high-school girls who had been abused. Bond says, "You know, animation is such a great medium for doing stereotypes—can it be a medium for undoing them?"

The Independent: Your films *Dierdre's Choice*, *Macha's Curse*, and *Ceridwen's Gift* are all based on Celtic myths with strong heroines—how did you approach the stories and interpret them for your own purposes?

Bond: I came at them first from sort of a typically American perspective—kind of that goddess-feminism stuff. But the essentialism in goddess worship is really not where I'm at anymore. I'm much more interested in playing back an old story that has some resonance with what is going on, what could go on, what has gone on in society. So I made a point of trying to meet some Irish scholars, asking why were they written down in the first place, what do they mean for that society, what do they mean now? These stories are about the shifting place of women in a society that was switching over from a clan type of system to a national state, in which the king was supreme.

In *Dierdre's Choice* it's also an abuse situation, and unfortunately suicide was her way out, which isn't something we want to triumph to our youth. But, you know, when the teen moms program saw *Macha*, they really got that.

The Independent: Your film *Remote Control*, which deals with media images in the Gulf War, is political

in a much more immediate way than the myths. Do you see your work going more in that direction?

Bond: I really liked making *Remote Control*, partly because it was so immediate. I made it in about a month and a half. It was so upsetting to me to see the video-gamed war, the images that played on TV and just kept repeating. The myths *are* more obtuse. When I first started getting into doing those myths, no one had really used direct animation to tell a narrative story, and so I wanted to see if it could be done. Now I am looking to do pieces, not necessarily in the vein of *Remote Control*, but certainly more tied in with society now. My Celtic days are behind me.

The Independent: How has the animation scene in Portland changed since you started out, sixteen years ago?

Bond: In responding to the hungry media, there's more commercial animation going on, a lot more, so that a lot of independent artist types are doing pretty much commercial projects. But if there isn't as much personal work being done, there is still a great deal of respect for it.

The Independent: Do you think the animation culture is as open to women as it was in the '70s and '80s?

Bond: It seems like there's less opportunity for young people to come along. The grant days are pretty dried up, so a lot of the things that helped me get started, the Western States grants and all that, have been cut. If you're going to do personal work, even if it costs three thousand or five thousand, where do you get that from? Portland has had this lively independent scene, and it still does to some extent, but there's this whole new thing with CD-ROM and the Internet, in terms of people hungry for moving images. And that tends to be a guy's world. It's the same with the commercial world. That shouldn't dissuade anyone from doing this. But take the Levi's for Women campaign. Now that was a really nice ad campaign, and they had some women animators there, but I know here in Portland, when push came to shove, they chose the guys to direct.

The thing that drew me into animation is that it was really accessible. Film tends to be a highly technical and expensive medium, and I found a way in that was really low-tech and relatively inexpensive. Now, with computers, there's this exciting thing going on with the prices falling, and I'm thinking maybe you can get in there like you used to be able to if you could afford a Bolex in the '70s. Maybe there'll be a resurgence of people doing stuff that says something, that isn't just corporate remakes. I just had a student who made an entire movie using Claris Works. And it's beautiful! She didn't know it, but she's an animator.

HEATHER VAN ROHR

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From Hillary Denney's *The Job*

Courtesy artist

VANCOUVER ANIMATION:

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BY LESLIE BISHKO

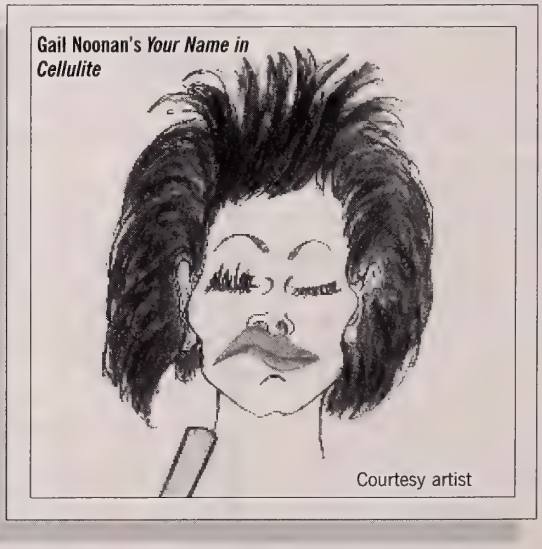
FOR A MOMENT, IT SEEMED THAT THE EXPLOSION OF Vancouver's animation industry would be followed by the implosion of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), longtime backer of Canadian animation. When drastic cutbacks in federal arts funding forced the NFB to do the same, things looked mighty grim. However, the restructuring has actually revived production, with an eye toward maintaining and expanding artists' visions by merging old and new technologies. Production "streams" and a shift to digital postproduction have replaced studios, facilities, and personnel.

The NFB pursues its mandate of "interpreting Canada to Canadians" by producing content within two major streams: Documentary and Animation/Children/Multimedia. Nationally, the NFB is dedicated to 85 productions a year, 15 of which are animated. Under the NFB, the filmmaker works on salary and the film is produced and distributed by the NFB. However, this structure means that the film is subject to the NFB's editorial control.

Currently, Vancouver animators who receive "investigate" funds for storyboarding and budgeting must also conduct market research for their content. Independent producers can receive NFB support in the form of equipment loans and technical/professional services. These "assisted" films are usually first films, characterized by their experimental and innovative form or content.

Although Claire Maxwell says she endured agonizing bureaucratic delays with her recent NFB film *Ernie's Idea*, she has a positive view of her experience. "The film is an investment," she says. "The NFB will make editorial decisions based on keeping their standard of quality. Original vision can be explored within this context. The NFB questions the animator's motives and challenges them to make the film as best as it can be. Compared to any other place to go, I think it's great." Unfortunately, a still for *Ernie's Idea* is not available for this article; a signature was needed from an NFB executive who was on vacation.

Opinions about the animator-NFB relationship vary. Some moan about the NFB's horrible omnipotence, calling it the bureaucracy to end all bureaucracies. Some productions take so long that the NFB can't accept new proposals until the old projects are complete. Endless waiting leaves some animators feeling quite powerless over their creations, but others find that after going to B.C. Film, the Canada Independent Film and Video Fund, the Canada Council, the private sector, and broadcasters, the NFB is the only one to come through.


Gail Noonan's *Your Name in Cellulite*

Courtesy artist

The evolution of Vancouver's animation scene began with the establishment of the NFB Pacific Centre in 1965. Today, the Pacific Centre's chief, Svend-Erik Eriksen, is also the executive producer for the Animation/Children/Multimedia stream in all of western Canada, which includes the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. During the 70s, animators Marv Newland and Al Sens both established well-known commercial studios that have supported many independent productions.

Today, Vancouver's classically trained character animators are finding that their craft is now lucrative. A new Disney studio that makes direct-to-video productions looms large in Vancouver. Other major employers include Mainframe Entertainment, producers of the computer-animated television series *Reboot* and *Beastwars*, and Electronic Arts, a games company. While many independents have their roots in a pre-computer, experimental generation, the industry seeks a standard set of skills that come straight from the Disney legacy: clean, controlled line and mastery of the Disney Studio's 12 principles of animated movement.

In 1968, Emily Carr College of Art and Design (now the Emily Carr Institute) created an animation department, where instructor Hugh Foulds set the precedent in Vancouver for a non-commercial, fine-arts approach to independent animated

film. The local demand for animators has created a heyday for educators. At last count, there were six animation schools in Vancouver, each in fierce competition to offer the fastest training for the lowest tuition. Because these short-term schools (Capilano College, the Vancouver Film School, VanArts) choose to service the industry, Emily Carr keeps their curricular focus within a B.F.A. program while broadening its scope to include skills that allow the option of industry employment. Indies, students, and studios alike are flocking to Hillary Denney and Tara Donovan's unique series of workshops designed to introduce animators to skills and techniques used in commercial studios.

Local independents say they see the new Disney studio as either god's gift or the devil's workshop. Says NFB-Pacific Centre head Eriksen, "Some people make a pact with the devil to work in the industry long enough to pay off their student loans. The industry is sucking up people who are not all that original. The originators, thinkers, and doers still come to us."

The cast of characters

Jill Haras received National Film Board (NFB) funds to research techniques for her film *Joe Fortes*, a story about a lifeguard at Vancouver's English Bay. Tammy Knight will animate Haras' cut-out characters, then scan them into the computer for digital choreography and compositing. While they don't want to lose the handmade aspect of movement, compositing will make a crowded beach scene possible, complete with live-action water in the background—a brain-teaser for even the most baroque animator.

Ruben Moller is known for his elegantly handcrafted puppet animation, but his current Canada Council-funded production *Sheol*, a play on the myth of Eden, uses his self-designed computer-assisted camera stand (the Rue-Bot) to merge computer-animated figures with stop-motion camera work of a live set. The final composited images will be recorded to film, giving them a non-computer look.

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short *Why* tells "why" Halstead went to art school in her sixties. It was animated entirely on an Atari computer that Halstead plunked under the Oxberry camera to shoot onto film. After taking *Why* to Sundance, Halstead began *Catahari*, about a spiritual cat who believes that violence is wrong but is fascinated by mice and birds.

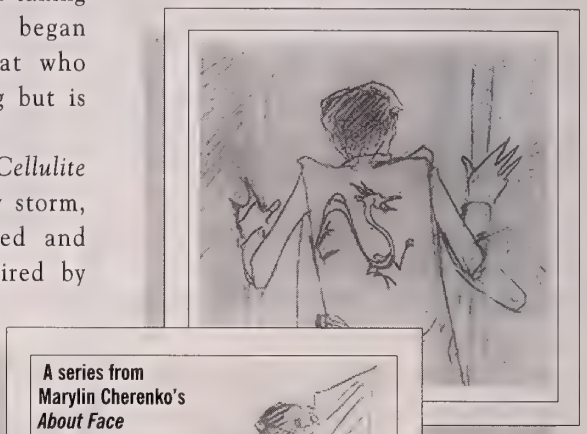
Gail Noonan's *Your Name in Cellulite* is taking the festival circuit by storm, challenging notions of primped and prodded feminine beauty. Inspired by Halstead's homespun approach to computer animation, Noonan has just completed *The Menopause Song* on her Amiga, using scanned-in gardening catalogues and photos of her vocal group, She-B-She.

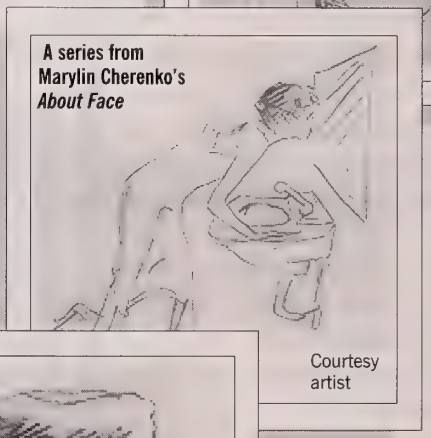
In less than two minutes, **Stephen Arthur**'s *Touched Alive* takes us on an evolutionary journey through 30 paintings by Canadian abstractionist Jack Shadbolt. The artist says Arthur has "penetrated the very image-making process which I have developed in my painting, to produce exactly its dynamic complexity."



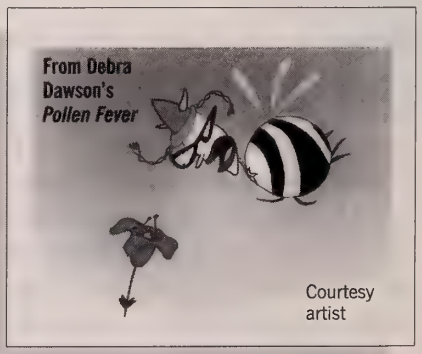
Martin Rose spent six years making *Trawna Tuh Belvul*, a rhythmic train ride into the Ontario countryside inspired by and animated to the nonsensical sounds of Earle Birney's poem of the same name. Rose animates with watercolored, pen-and-inked cut-outs that are filmed on a multiplane camera. The foreground layers cast shadows against the background as they move towards and away from the camera, creating a "2 1/2-D" effect. Rose is currently conceiving a film about a 10-year-old girl who explores urban neighborhoods.

Illustrator-turned-animator **Steve McCallum** is using NFB funding to storyboard *Ghost Stories*. His earlier films, *Debts*, about a tragic death on a farm in the prairies, and *From Flores*, the story of a west Vancouver Island shipwreck, are both short story adaptations done in an illustrative style that employs subtle pacing, camera angles, and static images.





After cutting her teeth in the animation industry, **Hillary Denney** received an NFB investigate for *The Job*, a film about a woman's day at work. A dig at



the process of animation itself, the film is about a woman's long hours at a job of trivial, monotonous tasks.

In 1990, **Sylvie Fefer** created *Personality Software*, in which "personality discs" become all the rage. She has begun *The Dandelion Lady*, a film about a bag lady who learns that a sacrifice can have wonderful repercussions.

Deb Dawson's *Pollen Fever*, produced at **Marv Newland**'s International Rocketship Ltd., is done in a graphic, cel-painted style. In it, a female bee sporting a beehive hairdo and patent leather handbag suffers several attempts to romance some flowers.

Lindsey Pollard's *The Chain Letter* uses simple black lines on white with limited color to offer a humorous account of chain letters. It received the Norman McLaren Prize for Student Film at the Montreal World Film Festival.

Katherine Li and Emily Carr instructor Marylin Cherenko bring classical drawing and painting skills to the animated canvas. Cherenko is currently animating *About Face*, which portrays a woman who confronts her inner dragon, reflected in the bathroom mirror one coffee- and cigarette-filled morning. After a long struggle with an arthritic condition, Li completed *Sabina* in 1991. Inspired by the writing of Anaïs Nin, colored pencil lines flow and form dreamlike images of women floating in the waters of their unconscious.

Ernie's Idea, co-directed by animator Claire Maxwell and writer Peter Vogler, is the latest Vancouver-made NFB production in the can. When a simple fellow named Ernie has his very first idea, it takes form as a character that disrupts and changes his life.

Leslie Bishko is a freelance computer animator, award-winning filmmaker, and founder of the Vancouver chapter of the Association Internationale du Film d'Animation. She is currently a PhD candidate at Simon Fraser University, researching human figure movement and computer animation methods.

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BEYOND MICROSOFT

BY ROBIN REIDY OPPENHEIMER

"The Pacific Northwest and specifically Seattle has been a fairly isolated area in the art world until recently, when arts activity in Seattle began to gain national attention.... The community of artists working in video in Seattle is rather small compared to the large numbers in other regions such as the Bay Area or New York... Overwhelmingly, the artists who work in video here also work in other media: sculpture, prints, photography, performance, etc., using video as another tool in their vocabulary to express their ideas."

— Norie Sato, "Artists' Video in Seattle," *Videoscope*, 1977

PUGET SOUND IS KNOWN IN THE WEATHER WORLD FOR ITS "CONVERGENCE ZONE," where two separate air masses come together from different directions to produce clouds and rain. This area is also becoming a convergence zone for arts and technology, where artists are as likely to know how to program a computer as they are to play a musical instrument or make a film. With Microsoft and other new multimedia companies importing tech-savvy artists of all types from around the world, they connect with an already-teeming pool of local talent earning a living while making art. Corporate employment helps these artists finance their films, produce their first CD-ROM in their living room, or subsidize their other life in a band.



This creative convergence didn't happen overnight. In the 1960s, Seattle was a player in the Marshall McLuhan-inspired cultural movement that eschewed the traditional categorization of art in the wake of the synthesizing force of technology. McLuhan's belief that "the artist picks up the message of cultural and technological challenge decades before its transforming impact occurs" was embodied in collaborations between artists and technicians like the notorious EAT, or Experiments in Art and Technology. This New York-based group was formed in New York by artist Robert Rauschenberg and engineer Billy Kluver in 1966, and they established chapters in several U.S. cities, including Seattle.





Energized by EAT, Seattle's Henry Art Gallery hosted multimedia presentations in the late sixties by artists and visionaries such as Hans Haacke, Stan van der Beek, Gene Youngblood, Allan Kaprow, and Merce Cunningham. The gallery's farsighted associate director, LaMar Harrington, says he was "absolutely convinced that if you could just get artists and technicians and scientists together, wonderful things were going to happen."

Also at that time, Seattle multimedia artist Doris Chase produced her kinetic sculptures by working with engineers, and her first computer film, *Circles I*, was created at the Boeing Company through the collaboration of computer programmers, dancers, and composer Morton Subotnik.

Out of Seattle's late '60's collaborative arts milieu, "and/or" was born in 1974. It was an internationally recognized alternative artists' space, founded by Anne Focke (who had worked for Harrington) and a group of multi-disciplinary artists, that became the seedbed for Seattle's current avant-garde art scene. For 10 years it served as a nexus for supporting and presenting local and national artists of all disciplines. They crossed traditional boundaries, used new technologies in sound and imagemaking, and lived the Futurist idea of life and artmaking being synonymous.

When "and/or" closed its doors in 1984, it spawned a second generation of artspaces, the Center on Contemporary Art (COCA), Soundwork, Nine One One, and Focal Point Media Center. COCA still exists, and Nine One One and Focal Point later merged to form what is now called 911 Media Arts Center.

911 continues to be a regional leader in media arts exhibition, education, and equip-

Below left: Scenes from Seattle's Speakeasy, one of the first cybercafes and a point of confluence for the city's media and cyber communities. At bottom: Joel Bachar, programmer of the screening series "Independent Exposure," which takes place at the cafe.

ment access. In 1994, 911 co-produced with Northwest CyberArtists a large-scale event called "Beyond Fast Forward" at the Seattle Center that laid the groundwork for 911's recent transformation into a digital media center. It included a weekend of interactive multimedia installations by local and national artists as well as workshops featuring multimedia artists and leaders from the region's high-tech industry. 911 now offers year-round workshops in computer animation, website design, and desktop nonlinear video editing, as well as traditional media production classes.

911 media services director Marianna Haniger acknowledges that there's still a division between traditional media artists working in film and video and the new digital artists who create special effects and design websites. "The languages of analog and digital video editing are similar, so that helps," she says, "but a lot of the newer digital technologies for special effects are complicated, and the interfaces are not well-designed for artists."

James Culbertson, 911's digital media specialist, sees graphic design, animation, and filmmaking techniques rapidly blending into one skill set. After graduating with a master's in Whole Systems Design from Antioch in Seattle, he learned traditional video and film production simultaneously with digital media skills at 911. "I'm the 'graphics for video' person at 911, and it helps that I can learn quickly how to adapt one technology to another," says Culbertson. "You can't be too attached to the old forms of mediamaking in order to get maximum use of the latest digital equipment."

Grant Janes is an aspiring Seattle filmmaker who is also learning how to bridge the worlds of film and computers. After graduating from Columbia in New York City and trying to make

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films there, he began earn a living through computer programming and designing websites. After moving to Seattle, he connected to the local filmmaking scene while working as a freelance website designer and programmer.

Janes says he enjoys the quick creative hit he gets from working in the digital world, but he ultimately wants to make films. "Filmmaking is a more organic, glacial process, and I enjoy the theatrical part of it," he says. "Working with real actors, dealing with sets—which is different from sitting in front of a computer monitor all day."



911, Seattle's only media arts center, has kept pace with the changing technologies, and now offers training in new media.
Photo: Marty Oppenheimer

Another rising force of convergence is the Speakeasy Cafe. Modeled after the concept of Santa Monica's Electronic Cafe, which connects a global community of media artists, the Speakeasy echoes the earlier "and/or" milieu with a digital twist. Traditional and media artists of all stripes meet and mix with computer and community-minded types in a commercial cafe that feels like a big artist's loft. The light-filled warehouse space holds a counter-service cafe with computer terminals scattered throughout the room (and friendly technical support staff), along with tables and chairs, couches, and an art gallery that doubles as a performance space. There's also a 50-seat multi-use exhibition space for film, video, audio, computer, and live performances.

Joel Bachar of Blackchair Productions works with Speakeasy to program "Independent Exposure," a monthly screening program for local, national, and international independent film, video, and computer artists. He describes the founders of Speakeasy as "organic artists who know how to grow a community. They built all the tables and chairs and created a space that can present poetry readings, jazz, techno-rock, drumming circles, an art gallery, film and video, performances. They even host fundraisers for educational groups in the city." He mentions that the Puget Sound Community School (a homeschool group) meets regularly at the Speakeasy and has overnighters "where eighth graders drink Zap cola and surf the Net all night."

Bachar, a video artist with a marketing day job, says he's discovered the joys and pitfalls of becoming a media curator and promoter of artists' works. He and fellow artist Scott Noegel recently founded the Seattle Independent Film and Video Consortium, which includes 911, the Speakeasy Cafe, two cable access shows (*Nice Soft Rutabaga* and *Offline*), and three other independent exhibition groups (Citizen Vagrom, Films from Here, and Shining Moment Films).

The consortium meets regularly to share information, promote each other's venues, and educate the local press about independent media. This proliferation of venues in the wake of diminished government grants indicates a true grassroots explosion of independent mediamaking in the city.

Multimedia artists with high-tech day jobs create a convergence of commercial and artmaking values, which could portend the future of how artists can influence local cultures and economies. It remains to be seen if this uneasy balance will make for a renaissance in the new century—or if it just means we'll get a new and improved Windows operating system in the year 2000.

DIGITAL VANGUARD

VANCOUVER'S

BY MARGARET GALLAGHER

IN VANCOUVER, IT FEELS LIKE MULTIMEDIA PERMEATES everyone's lives. Web design and "new media" companies pop up like clover, video game companies can't stop growing, every other communications firm is proud to announce its new "interactive" division, and the Vancouver Film School offers its sold-out multimedia program at more than $15,000 a pop.

While it's hard to argue that multimedia is anything but commercially driven, Vancouver also has a strong community of artists who combine grassroots methodology with new technologies to share resources, build dialogue, and create new works.

Vancouver's Electronic Arts Festival offers what you might call media public access at its finest.

Video In Studios and the Western Front Society are long-time artist-run centers doing their best to give people a voice on the digital landscape. Both established in the early '70s, Video In and Western Front have been working together and independently to provide affordable access to tools and a forum for new works and ideas.

Video In was originally formed for the production and presentation of independent video, as well as to encourage media literacy. However, Video In has evolved with the technology. In addition to its analog video facilities, Video In now offers affordable digital editing on its Avid and ProTools systems and recently added a multimedia suite. Anyone can join Video In for a nominal fee, and members have full access to equipment at subsidized rates after completing the training workshops. People can also volunteer their work in exchange for time on the gear; for many artists, this represents their only opportunity to work with new technologies.

Once a month, Video In also hosts an "On-line Cafe" in which local and international artists present new media work in a salon-style setting. "We try to introduce new media and on-line arts to people who can't necessarily afford access to a computer, and provide a forum for people to talk about technology and its implications," says programming director Ken Anderlini. "I think it's important to have a dialogue around new technologies, and look at it in a critical light." Participating artists have included Oliver Hockenhall, Kathy Kennedy, Sharon Matarazzo, and the Lock Up Your Daughters Collective.

Artist-run center Western Front also has a long history in electronic-based arts. Through their artist-in-residence program, Western Front gives artists access to high-tech tools as well as the opportunity to experiment. The Front also houses a gallery for interactive media-based works, and recent participating artists have included composers George Lewis and Matt Rogalsky, audio artist Ken Gregory and computer-integrated artist Thecla Schiphorst.

Western Front also gives public access to new technologies through special workshops, including a unique multimedia training program sponsored by the Canadian government. Twice a year, Western Front Multimedia offers a free full-time multimedia training program to a select number of unemployed/underemployed artists, giving them new skills that add to their artistic practice and help them make a living.

Both media arts centers support Vancouver's Electronic Arts Festival, which you might call media public access at its finest. Held for four days each spring, EAF brings in artists and educators from across the country for performances, presentations, panels, and technical workshops. Other supporters include Artspeak Gallery and Digital Earth. "It's a chance for people to learn, get new ideas, make connections and increase awareness," says Western Front Media Director and conference organizer Rob Kozinuk.

Next year's event promises to be even bigger, provided funding is in place. "It's really important for artists to get involved in new media," says Kozinuk. "It's a powerful communications tool, and we have to think about what kind of messages are being communicated, and by whom."

Western Front: http://www.wimsey.com/ ~front; Video In Studios: http://www.video-in.com.

Margaret Gallagher is a Vancouver-based writer, performer, and video artist. She has worked in the new media field since 1993

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ADBUSTERS

MESSES WITH MADISON AVENUE

BY CAROLINE COUTTS



KALLE LASN DOESN'T MINCE words. "There is no democracy on the airwaves," states the cofounder of Adbusters, a Vancouver-based activist organization. "Television is the most powerful social communications tool of our time, but the average citizen does not have access to it. This pandering to the commercial interest has gone so far that our basic freedom of speech is being violated."

The Adbusters Media Foundation came about in 1988, when Lasn, Bill Schmalz, and a small group of concerned environmentalists tried to counter the effects of a television advertising campaign waged by MacMillan Bloedel, British Columbia's largest forestry company. The MacBlo ads were designed to head off public dissent over the company's forestry practices with soothing messages of "Forests Forever." Lasn and his group produced their own television spot with a different message: the continuation of modern logging practices would lead inevitably to the all-out destruction of old-growth forests.

This "uncommercial" was refused broadcast by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the nation's public broadcasting network, on the grounds that it was too controversial. The resulting public debate was enough for the CBC to capitulate by pulling the MacBlo ads. But they still wouldn't run the Adbusters' uncommercial.

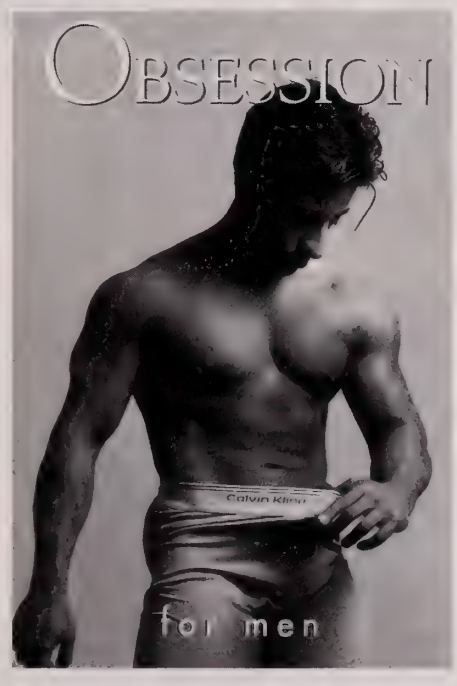
Shortly after this run-in, Adbusters began publishing its eponymous magazine, an interesting mix of articles on everything from TV addiction, consumerism, and living without your car to "culture jamming." The magazine accepts no outside advertising, instead creating its own satirical "anti-ads." ("Welcome to Malboro [sic] Country" reads one that depicts a shivering group of office workers grabbing a quick smoke in the back alley.)

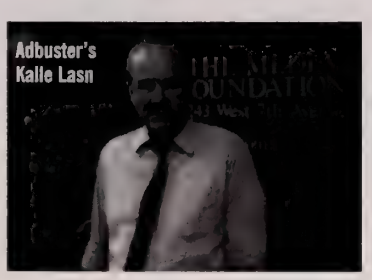
But the main thrust of the organization remains its TV uncommercials. A documentary filmmaker by trade, Lasn is convinced of the potential of short, inexpensive films and videos to affect social change. "Our ads hit home," says Lasn. "They break that trance television induces in all of us." Since the original MacBlo uncommercial, there have been 25 more. But getting his messages on television continues to be a battle.

Since 1988, Adbusters has made more than 70 efforts to purchase airtime for its anti-consumption and environmental spots on major North American networks. It has succeeded only 15 times. In 1994, Lasn attempted to broadcast *Autosaurus*, a stop-action animation about the inevitable death of car culture. It was intended to be shown on *Driver's Seat*, a CBC program devoted to the automobile. When advertisers on

Driver's Seat threatened to leave the program, the CBC pulled *Autosaurus* and refused to run it again.

This led Adbusters to initiate legal action under the Canadian Charter of Rights. Last year, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that "the CBC had violated its contract with the Media Foundation in refusing to air *Autosaurus* on *Driver's Seat*," but ruled that the Canadian Charter did not apply to the CBC. The Media Foundation will next take its case to the B.C. Court of Appeal, fully expecting to follow it to the Supreme Court of Canada. Lasn expects to win his case, and says in doing so he will be setting a Canadian Charter precedent. "This will be a media literacy lesson for the whole nation. . . . It will open up television airwaves as a real marketplace for ideas, not just as a mass-merchandising tool of the advertising world."





Adbusters' legal battles have expanded into the United States, where numerous attempts to buy airtime on the networks have failed. In April, 1995, the NBC, ABC, and CBS affiliates in New York rejected 13 separate uncommercials. "There's no law that says we have to run anything," insists Art Moore of ABC. "[They're] our airwaves, and we'll decide what we want to air or not air." When they choose a lawyer to represent them in the U.S., Adbusters plans to proceed with First Amendment legal action.

Lasn believes the outcome of these legal cases is imperative to our survival as an informed and democratic society. "If we lose the freedom of the airwaves, our goose is cooked," he says. "What would result is an Orwellian situation."

But the uncommercials are being seen. Universities across North America use them in communications courses, and community television and public access channels have been willing to air the spots.

Adbusters has won some battles over the years, and they are succeeding in getting their message out. But Lasn isn't satisfied. . . yet. He wants his uncommercials on every major network in North America—to incite people to change the way they think, and ultimately, the way they act. And after that? "After that," says Lasn with a smile, "I retire."



Adbusters, 1243 West 7th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V6H 1B7 Canada; (604)736-9401 or 1-800-663-1243; fax:(604)737-6021; adbusters@adbusters.org; http://www.adbusters.org/adbusters/

Caroline Coutts is programming coordinator at Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Society, Vancouver's only film co-op, where she programs and promotes the work of Canadian independent filmmakers.

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MEDIA LITERACY LAB: KID CATALYST

BY CYNTHIA ROSE



ALTHOUGH MEDIA LITERACY is a nationwide topic, the number of successful innovators in this young field are few. In the state of Washington, the Fast Forward Media Lab is the only organization dedicated to media education. But in its two years of existence, it has managed to reach hundreds of kids—and involve numerous schools, city agencies, arts organizations, and film equipment companies to boot.

Fast Forward was cofounded by Mallory Graham, a freelance video producer, and Sandy Cioffi, a high-school social studies teacher. The pair met at a conference on women in film and soon found they were in agreement on a central point: that it was time to merge academic theories of media literacy with production training.

Their first project was with Interagency, an adjunct to Seattle's public schools (what Cioffi calls "a last-chance hotel for kids"). She and Graham led these teens through scripting and production of a video on the touchy subject of nuclear power. Through this project, the lab found its niche: teaching and critiquing the structure of media while creating it.

Subsequently Fast Forward has proved a local groundbreaker. Last year they got 911, Jack Straw Studios, the Seattle Academy, and the Experience Music Project to collaborate on "Plugged In!," a three-week workshop that taught 12 teens how to make a music video. Students the same age as MTV decoded that world, breaking down the points-of-view, film styles, camera angles, and stories. The result was *Day Two*, their own video of the local band Juned. The youthful authors thought the process "really cool." Says Isaac Meek, who served as cameraman, "More teachers should learn from the way Sandy does things."

Fast Forward then went to South Africa, taking middle-schoolers as a video crew. During their three-week trip, the students analyzed the differences between mass media in South Africa and the U.S. and produced a short about the legacy of apartheid.

Currently, the lab is finishing *Terminal 187*, a project involving 350 kids. Initiated by the Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, the film features neophyte actors of color in 25 roles. *Terminal 187* is based on the real-life story of Angeleno James Lollie. Cioffi describes it as "sort of *It's a Wonderful Life* if you stood that film on its head. A kid called G-Money gets shot and, while unconscious, sees what could have been."

The project also embraces "Shoot Film, Not People," a nine-week mini-film school. During this period, students are mentored by working professionals who show them every below-the-line job, from director to gaffer.

Terminal 187's list of sponsors reflects the kind of respect Fast Forward has earned. It ranges from Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation to the Paul Allen Foundation, from King County Community Services to the Seattle Urban Health Alliance. Kodak donated film, as did local equipment companies, such as Oppenheimer Camera and Pacific Grip and Lighting.

Says Cioffi, "It helps that we're professionals. It's always easier to put things together when you're meeting people you have just dealt with commercially."

Having just wound up "Media Underground," a media literacy summer school at 911, the Fast Forward team looks forward to the autumn and the start of a cherished project: a short film they'll make with homeless youth.

Given their growing list of commitments, Fast Forward's two founders now operate as independent contractors with a satellite crew of film technicians, artists, dancers, and photographers. But the central aim remains the same: to teach kids to see media even as they take control of it. That's a challenge, but it's not the biggest one. "That comes with the end of almost any project, when the kids are really high on making film," says Cioffi. "They're just glowing, and they look at us and say, 'Okay, what do we do now? Where do we go next?' "

Cioffi sighs slowly. "And that's very tough. That's what I face with my own work each day."

Fast Forward Media Lab, 1335 N. Northlake Way, Seattle WA 98103; (206) 633-2669.

Cynthia Rose covers arts, culture, and technology for the Seattle Times, *and the British web site state51, works as a producer for the BBC, and MTV Europe, and is author of* Design After Dark *and the forthcoming* Design Online.

MEDIA EDUCATION

PROFILE
VELCROW RIPPER

Environmental Auteur

I TALK TO VELCROW RIPPER OVER THE PHONE FROM Galiano Island, a small island off the southwest coast of British Columbia where he's teaching a class on documentary film production at the Gulf Islands Film and Television School. Ripper's only 32 years old, but he's already giving students the benefit of his 17 years' experience in making films and videos.



Above, from left to right, *Bones of the Forest* co-directors Heather Frise and Velcrow Ripper with interview subject Anna Prough. Below, a still from *Bones*. Photos courtesy filmmaker.

Ripper is known as a hands-on filmmaker—he wrote, directed, produced, shot, edited, optically printed, and sound designed the majority of his 30-plus projects, most of which are short films. His latest film is his most ambitious. *Bones of the Forest*, made in collaboration with Heather Frise, is a feature-length documentary on the environmental consequences of contemporary logging practices in British Columbia. Hot Docs!, Canada's annual documentary festival, awarded it Best of the Festival and Best Feature-Length Documentary.

For Ripper, *Bones of the Forest* neatly coalesces the two paths his work has taken: experimental/new narrative and issue-oriented documentary. The film is a politically charged attack on the contemporary logging practices that have resulted in a 50 percent reduction of old-growth forests since 1975. (As one retired logger notes, some of those trees took 2,000 years to grow and only five minutes to cut down.)

Using oral histories told by native and non-native elders, the film explores the often conflicting relationship to the land of "those that were here" and "those that came." For some indigenous people, says Ripper, "the first contact with white settlers didn't happen until about one hundred years ago...so they had incredible insights and a great sense of loss."

The interviews, shot mostly in black-and-white, are intercut with three other strands: optically printed archival film, lyrical close-ups of the forest, and hand-held or pixillated shots of demonstrations, including blockades in the old-growth forests and the 1992 Columbus Day demonstration in San Francisco. *Bones of the Forest* challenges the conventions of the documentary by using a host of experimental techniques, including time-lapse, slow-motion, optical printing, scratch animation, Godardian text overlays, and an atmospheric soundscape. Ripper and Frise also freely combine super-8, 16mm, video, color, and black-and-white.

"Film is a very powerful medium," he says. "It has the power to transform our consciousness. If you can make people think and move them on a visceral level —if you can change one person's thinking—then you've succeeded."



When Ripper was a high school student in the small town of Gibsons on British Columbia's west coast, a teacher provided early inspiration by helping the school get its own cable station. Ripper and other students made their own programs, often on community, social, or environmental issues, and saw them locally broadcast. For Ripper, this was an important early lesson in the power and potential of visual media.

After testing out the communications departments of five different universities, Ripper settled on Concordia University in Montreal. Graduating in 1986, he spent the next few years working in sound and special effects on Canadian features such as Bruce Macdonald's *Highway 61* and Atom Egoyan's *The Adjuster*.

Around the same time, Ripper began work on his first dramatic feature film, *I'm Happy, You're Happy, We're All Happy, Happy, Happy, Happy*. Shot in Montreal, the film is the story of a happy fool whose innocence is destroyed when he gets a job in a factory sprinkling salt on crackers. John Griffin of the *Montreal Gazette* described the film as "a hallucinatory low-budget mix of loon camera, found sound, scratch animation, cock-eyed set-ups, special effects and general dementia." Egoyan declared Ripper "the most promising new filmmaker of the year."

Ripper has plans for a number of documentary and dramatic projects. Next up is an hour-long documentary with Frise about the trophy hunting of bears, but Ripper's interests now also extend into performance art, action poetry, and hypermedia on the Web. Whatever he's doing, Ripper's sure to be pushing the boundaries of media as an art form and a tool for social change.

Bones of the Forest, Transparent Film, S-43 C-11 Galiano Island B.C., V0N 1P0 Canada; (604)878-9261; Transparent@Mindlink.bc.ca.; http: www-nmt.banffcentre.ab.ca/ Artists/scaredsacred

CAROLINE COUTTS

Caroline Coutts is programming coordinator at Cinemworks Independent Filmmakers Society, Vancouver's only film co-op, where she programs and promotes the work of Canadian independent filmmakers.

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON:

Small town, big film community. How do they do it?

BY DEVON DAMONTE AND JEFF BARTONE

OLYMPIA, THE TOWN NAMED FOR THE MYTHIC home of the Gods. What could warrant such distinction? Is it the water or the punk rock? The timber or the freaks? Somewhere between the ocean, trees, slackers, and rockers, the city of Olympia, Washington evolved from a rugged capitol city port town of ox-cart pioneers into a community bustling with state workers, and bristling with espresso-fueled students. Unlike many small towns, this one thrives on creative activity.

Located roughly midway between Seattle and Portland, Olympia has long been one of America's great unsung centers of underground counterculture. On the surface, it's a standard small town, albeit one located on the extraordinarily scenic southern shores of Puget Sound, between the Olympic Mountains and Mount Rainier. However, the introduction of Evergreen State College in the early seventies changed the complexion of Olympia.

Evergreen, which began as a bold experiment in unstructured learning, was home to a creative synergy of hippies, punks, environmental scientists, and installation artists, and has grown into one of the most respected liberal arts colleges in the country. Visionary core staff from Evergreen's community radio station KAOS left to pioneer independent music publication *OP Magazine*, and later, SubPop records.

OP put Olympia on the cultural map and crystallized the energies of many resident creatives. Bands soon made their way from all parts of the country to appear at alternative spaces such as the funky storefront club Tropicana. Three illustrious record labels emerged—K Records, Kill Rock Stars, and Yoyo recordings—all of which still fuel the vibrant roack scene. Many spaces carried the torch brightly then flickered out, and several small venues now flourish downtown, such as The Midnight Sun, home to innovative theater productions.

IN 1980, OLYMPIA GAINED ITS MEDIA ARTS DEN mother, the Olympia Film Society (OFS). Initially, OFS was just a way to see art films without commuting to the big city. However, it's recently embraced a broad-ranging identity as a nonprofit, volunteer-operated, membership-based (1500 strong) community organization with a mission to broaden access to film and allied arts.



One-time vaudeville house the Capitol Theater is now Olympia Film Society headquarters. Courtesy OFS

In the original OFS screening room, sound was so bad that only subtitled works could be shown. Now OFS provides an alternative space to die for. Since taking over management of the 700-seat Capitol Theater in 1990, OFS hosts an all-ages community resource for music, performance, and visual arts from local producers.

The Capitol Theater building's rich history includes fascinating parallels to current usage. While the Capitol Theater is the standard variety auditorium built in the 1920s that once existed in every town in the country, its mere survival makes it a rare treasure. In almost constant use since its opening in 1924, the Capitol was built for mixed usage of live vaudeville theater and movies. There's a complete stage with fly area and hemp riggings, as well as a projection booth with professional 35mm and 16mm systems. This mixture of live and movie entertainment continues to this day. Between movie nights and performance nights, the movie screen is raised, music equipment is set up on the edge of the stage, and the backstage becomes an all-ages club for local and touring bands. The music/movies connection even extends to the current theater owner, who once played the organ for silent films and singalongs.

OFS conducts double-feature screenings four nights a week year-round, with occasional special events (visiting artists, classic films, etc.), plus a 10-day film festival each fall. Screenings usually consist of the best available arthouse fare liberally sprinkled with more adventuresome independent, international, and underground works. Programming is selected through open participatory decision-making among members, volunteers, and audience suggestions. OFS screenings have kept pace with population growth, increasing from monthly to weekly to the current full calendar.

The Olympia Film Festival, which began in 1984, shines as OFS's annual highlight. The 10-day event screens more than 40 feature films, videos, and allied arts events and approximately

40-50 short films. Film screenings are about evenly divided between American independents and international fare. The festival reflects the diverse passions of volunteer programmers, resulting in remarkably sophisticated programming. Admissions in 1995 topped 7,000. Guests in recent years have included Noam Chomsky, Fugazi, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Crispin Glover, Sadie Benning, Russ Meyer, Allison Anders, Udo Kier, Kenneth Anger, and Gus Van Sant (with diary films).

OFS and Capitol Theater also sponsor significant media events from other groups. The Northwest International Lesbian Gay Film Festival, now in its 10th year, is a four-day program showcasing the diversity of the lesbian and gay experience featuring 30 programs screened at Capitol Theater and Evergreen. Festival guests have included Vito Russo, Arthur Dong, Marlon Riggs, Andrea Weiss, Barbara Hammer, Pratibha Parmar, and Cheryl Dunye.

Olympia's Latin American Film Festival, Cine Al Frente ("up-front cinema") was christened this April. With the support of the Washington State Commission of Hispanic Affairs and OFS, the week-long event offered 20 programs at three venues and 10 speakers from as many countries. Issues of identity and the convergence of cultures, peoples, and traditions in Latin America were emphasized.

SPOTLIGHT

SINCE OFS ADMISSIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS FUND at least 90 percent of operating costs, OFS doesn't have to monitor the fickle winds of change in cultural funding. That said, a few small grants from the Washington State Arts Commission and the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (once an NEA-funded lifeblood) have often meant the narrow difference between solvency and debt. More recently, a resourceful campaign of solicitations resulted in generous contributions from regional audio equipment manufacturers.

OFS survived the rise and fall of the Film Society movement by maintaining relevance and responsiveness to the community. It's one of the few places folks can get hands-on training in film programming and every aspect of the infrastructure that keeps cinema vital. OFS also provides a small town with a steady infusion of alternatives to mainstream culture, which helps Olympia remain a steadfast reminder that much of the most innovative and rewarding cultural activity takes place outside urban cities.

Devon Damonte is a fanatic for watching and creating experimental animation and is the programming director for the Olympia Film Society. Jeff Bartone has been a force to be reckoned with since the society's inception and currently serves as its technical director.

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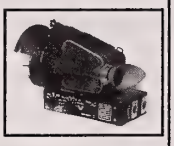
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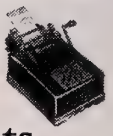
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PROFILE
THE OLYMPIA FILM RANCH

Le Danse of Community Filmmaking

FILMMAKERS KNOW THAT IT'S EASY TO LOSE SIGHT OF creativity when dealing with a crew, camera, lighting, film developers, financing, and talent. To provide filmmaking experiences that are more wonderful than wearying, the Olympia Film Society (OFS) created a production wing called the Olympia Film Ranch, dedicated to pooling donated equipment and experience, providing a library of filmmaking books, and holding beginners' classes in super-8 filmmaking.

The Film Ranch began with makeshift workshops taught by visiting filmmakers like David Cox (Australia) and Craig Baldwin (San Francisco). In 1994, local Walter McGinnis gave the initial push to organize it into something more substantial. Over the last couple of years, someone or another took the helm, called meetings, and arranged classes. This catch-as-catch-can arrangement flourished for a while, but then enthusiasm would die and the organization would fall dormant.

However, the Ranch recently got a fortuitous kick in the pants in the form of Kris Nelson. Inexperienced in filmmaking but recognizing the potential of the Film Ranch, she worked out of a windowless room in the Capitol Theater and reorganized the entire office. Local filmmakers Sean Savage and Kevin Bunce pitched in by sorting all the donated equipment and building an editing suite down the hall.

The Film Ranch still needed something to solidify the organization and prevent it from backsliding into oblivion. That something was a short film project. Focusing on a single production created a more tangible medium in which to share skills and bring new people into the fold.

By consensus, the Film Ranch chose a script written by Eunice Blavascunas called *Le Danse d'Individuelle*. Blavascunas, who is also the director and star, dabbles in a variety of mediums. Unlike most Ranchers, she's never studied or worked in film before.

Le Danse d'Individuelle is a black-and-white silent film about the suffering of a woman who can't escape her melodramatic and insular world. Fleshed out with a fortune teller, a stern boyfriend, a whimsically aborted suicide on railroad tracks, and an extravagant dance sequence, it's short, loose, and zany enough to allow experimentation and mistakes.



The low-to-no-budget status forced Ranchers to become innovative. To achieve more dynamic shots, Savage, Bunce, and cinematographer Paul Potasnik created the "lumber cam," a 2" x 6" board with a tripod head mounted in the center. By holding it while perched on ladders, they created the aerial perspectives necessary for intricate dance shots. And by pushing the lumber cam along waxed railroad tracks, they simulated a train's point of view.

The most ambitious shoot took place on the local geological phenomenon, the Mima Mounds. In the shot, Blavascunas is flanked by exotic belly dancers and wields a bull horn as she basks in the admiration of about thirty dancers writhing atop giant gopher mounds. A few performers even executed acrobatic flips from a trampoline. Enthusiasm didn't wane even when the crew was warned of an angry bull nearby.

Support for *Le Danse d'Individuelle* came from locals who donated everything from hair and makeup work, morale-boosting morsels, farm animals, and use of a trailer. All equipment also came from donors, including a Bolex 16mm Reflex camera from local filmmaker Kelly Hart. Kodak donated film, and primary processing costs are covered by a loan from a Film Rancers.

The collective/community approach is a natural for filmmaking; people gravitate toward supporting projects in which they feel involved. The Film Ranch collected donations at an open screening of short works by local film- and videomakers called the 30 Minute Max. It also held a benefit screening of Busby Berkeley's *Gold Diggers of 1933*.

And, like any snotty-nosed kid, the Ranchers rely on their parent, the Olympia Film Society, to provide the nonprofit foundation and stability from which the Film Ranch can spring into something fantastic on its own. *Le Danse d'Individuelle* is just the beginning. Ambitions extend beyond this summer's project and the Film Ranch hopes to roll into grander productions in the future.

MICHAEL COUSINO

Film Rancher Michael Cousino is a video artist and co-director of the 13th Annual Olympia Film Festival



REGIONAL FORECAST

The Northwest Film & Video Festival

BY DON CAMPBELL

MAYBE IT'S THE INCESSANT NORTHWEST DRIZZLE or the persistent and low-slung gun-metal skies that drives the natives inside. Maybe they're just a contemplative bunch by nature, who tend to look at things long and hard. Maybe they're simply driven to document their wit and independence. Though Portland is a certified city of voracious readers and polished writers, film may be the next most popular way its residents capture their particular brand of introspection and independence.

Durable as an old growth fir and nearly as venerated, the Northwest Film Center, located downtown at the Portland Art Museum, has cultivated a fertile place to do just that for the last 25 years. Each year this metropolitan area of over one million awaits the center's new round of classes, screenings, and festivals, earning the center a regional reputation and national renown for its endeavors, ardor, and care of film.

And the winner is...

If film is the medium, then the Northwest Film & Video Festival delivers the message. Now in its twenty-third year, this festival distinguishes the center like towering Mt. Hood distinguishes Portland. Come August, film- and videomakers from Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana submit works to the Big One, held in November. The festival, which stretches out over nine or 10 days, has no categories, no quotas, and no stipulations for the number of shorts or features included. Upwards of 30 works are screened, and they fall by fate, kismet, and the juror's whim into categories and themes.

For example, Last year's juror, John Cooper of the Sundance Institute, grouped films into categories like "Rapid Eye Movement" (16 animated, experimental, dramatic, and documentary shorts), "Boundless: The Feminine Eye," "Cultures and Collisions" (documentaries and animated works about people and land colliding), "People Near Here" (films about creating a community out of empathy and not fear), plus selected feature presentations. This year juror Dan Ireland, cofounder of the Seattle International Film Festival and a film producer in his own right, will select from close to 300 entries—up nearly 100 from last year. For the first time, there will be a separate panel to look at student work. "It's really open," says associate director Howard Aaron. "The best work wins out regardless of genre."


Poster art for this year's Northwest Film & Video festival.

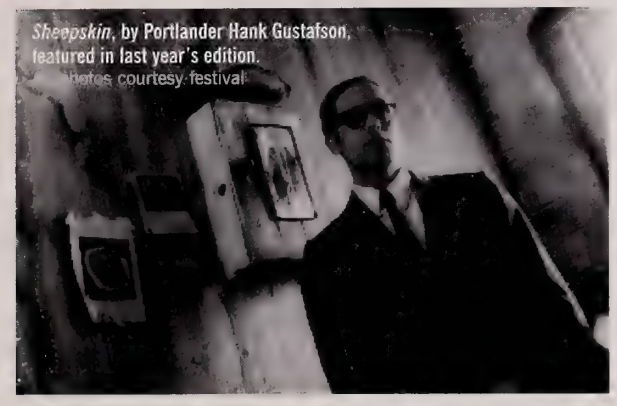
Entrants compete for more than cash and prizes. The festival provides a visibility that filmmakers like Will Vinton, Gus Van Sant, Jim Blashfield, Rose Bond, Joanna Priestley, Karl Krogstad, and others have exploited to launch their ascents toward international recognition.

Each year more than 250 independently produced films and videos find their way to Aaron, center director Bill Foster, and festival coordinator Lisa Pearson, and ultimately into the hands of a single juror. "This is a chance to bring in an outside person and get their perspective," Foster says. "We try to get someone with a broad overview of the national scene."

"When you look at all of these films together," says 1995 juror Cooper, "they become something of a collective brain scan of this place, the Northwest."

Says festival coordinator Lisa Pearson, "The changes year to year are radically different. Last year there were a lot of good experimental works. Two or three out of 14 were narrative shorts. This year there's a lot of narrative work. It seems to change from year to year. I'm impressed with it being completely different. Each year there's a different cycle of filmmakers producing their work. My job as coordinator is to make sure the work gets seen, to have a forum for the best films."

Themes emerge from the year's selections. "The programs get shaped a bit in trying to put them together [for the public]. Themes do emerge at times, but it's usually after the fact," Foster says. "There are always surprises."



Sheepskin, by Portlander Hank Gustafson, featured in last year's edition. Photos courtesy festival

The next 25 years

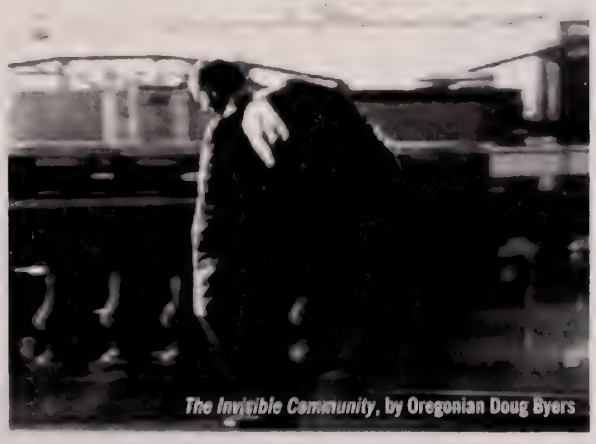
The Northwest Film Center and its regional festival do as much as anything to define the Northwest psyche. It is the artistic hub for the local film community, operating as a training ground and a jumping off place for careers in advertising, television production, and the burgeoning film industry in Oregon. Seattle has a bigger film community, says Foster, "but it's fractionalized. There's no common ground." He believes Portland's scene is more cross-pollinated and supportive.

"We've done a lot just to nurture and create a sense that there is a community here," says Foster. "Even if they're not literally creating their scene out of the Film Center, I think it's part of the fabric that says this is a place to stay and live. Things can happen here."

They're certainly happening at the center, which celebrates its 25th anniversary next year. In addition to the Northwest Film & Video Festival, the center hosts several other festivals: the Portland Jewish Film Festival, the Portland International Film Festival, and the Young People's Film & Video Festival. On top of that, it presents various thematic series throughout the year, including Reel Music (the merging of music and film); Frames of Mind (psychology on film); Icons, Rebels & Visionaries (arts on film); and Novel Ideas (literature and film).

Sadly, the Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowship program, funded through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and administered by the Northwest Film Center, was eliminated by the NEA in 1994. However, some grant money is still available to regional makers. Oregon film and video artists are eligible for up to $5,000 from the Oregon Arts Commission Media Arts Fellowship program. In addition, the center still offers statewide residency programs that place artists in grade schools, high schools, and community settings.

The center has enjoyed steady growth over the last quarter century. Its operating budget the first year hovered in the $25,000 range, but the center now speeds along with $1.2 million generated through classes, ticket sales, and corporate and grant support. "We try to recognize great work, and then get people to come see it," Foster says. "There are no standards or constraints."



The Invisible Community, by Oregonian Doug Byers

Portland freelance writer and editor Don Campbell contributes to many publications, including the Oregonian *and airline magazines* American Way, Horizon Air, *and* Alaska Air.

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ASIAN ADVOCATES:

THE SEATTLE ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

BY SHANNON GEE

FILMMAKERS JAY KOH, JOHN PAI, AND GRACE Lee-Park settle in at a table at Pacific Garden Restaurant in Seattle's International District, the city's central Asian neighborhood. The menu offers down-home Chinese-American diner fare, such as chicken-fried steak and chow fun. Like the food, these filmmakers' inspirations have range—from Paul Strand to Steven Spielberg. But all their films in some way address the Asian heritage they have in common and share with a sizable segment of the Northwest's population.


SAAFF guest Freida Lee Mock

Photo: J. Prelutsky

Asian/Pacific Islanders make up about 12 percent of Seattle's population and are the fastest-growing ethnic group in the state, more than doubling since 1980. With this growth, the Asian American filmmaking community has also begun to emerge. As it has gained critical mass, these filmmakers and their supporters have developed mechanisms to sustain this community, both in terms of production and exhibition.

"There's really not a film school here," observes the Portland-based Lee-Park. "Coming from Philly, a lot of the community grew up around the film school, and that's how people crewed together. It's interesting that it could happen here without that kind of support." Pai, who came to Seattle via New York and Chicago, adds, "Helping other people's projects, facilitating projects, for me is a measure of success. I feel it's very important to have this community organized and have these stories told by ourselves, by people of color." This mandate is shared by two organizations central to Asian/Pacific American film in Seattle: Kingstreet Media and its off-shoot, the Seattle Asian American Film Festival (SAAFF).


SAAFF guest Kayo Hatta (center) on location with *Picture Bride*

Kingstreet Media was formed in the early eighties by a group of volunteers from the Pan-Asian American weekly newspaper, the *International Examiner*. Originally these journalists focused on skills workshops, teaching people how to take better photographs. Kingstreet has since developed into a full-fledged media arts organization that facilitates projects about and by the community.

"Kingstreet Media was *American Fish*," says Seattle filmmaker Jesse Wine about its role in his short. "They got the ball rolling in every way. They arranged the best crew I've ever seen, acted as our umbrella organization for 501-C status, and donated postproduction facilities."

Dean Wong, a founding member of Kingstreet Media, emphasizes the center's commitment to the community, first through teaching and now through producing. "There are more projects now, a lot of Asian Pacific works out there. It's a natural step to support them." Some past projects include Koh's short *My Brown Eyes* and his recently completed short, *kAMELEON*, and a number of community educational videos


From Jesse Wine's *American Fish*

and documentaries.

At the time Kingstreet was first formed, venues for Asian/Pacific American filmmaking were rare in the Pacific Northwest. So when codirectors William Satake Blauvelt, Ken Mochizuki, and Dean Hayasaka—all members of Kingstreet Media—made the film *Beacon Hill Boys* in 1985, they found they had no place to show it. To remedy this, Kingstreet created the Seattle Asian American Film Festival that year. As Blauvelt, now SAAFF programming director, recalls, they started with "a 16mm projector at the back of the room, bad sound, bad seats. But people really liked it and came out for it."



1995 SAAFF guests

For the next decade, the festival's schedule was sporadic. Resources allowed for just one more festival in 1987. Then in 1992, the current director of SAAFF, Emily Wong (at the time an undergraduate student), attended an Asian film series—then a rarity in Seattle—at the University of Washington. Seeing a need to create a larger venue for these films, she met with Blauvelt and Mike Wilson to talk about the possibility of starting up a third edition of the festival. With no time to organize a full festival, the group put together a small film series, "Japanese America on Film," to accompany an exhibition at the Wing Luke Asian Museum. The series' success inspired the group and a growing core of volunteers to put on a full festival in 1994. The result was a four-day showcase that included the premiere of Frieda Lee-Mock's Academy Award-winning *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*, a tribute to Asian American pioneer director Steven Okazaki, a panel with director Kayo Hatta (*Picture Bride*), and more than 40 film and video shorts by up-and-coming directors.

This year's festival, held November 9-11, will showcase over 30 films and videos, including Trinh T. Minh-ha's *A Tale of Love*, Sterla Gunnarson's *Diary of Evelyn Lau*, and Koh's *kAMELEON*, which appears in the Northwest Shorts showcase. Although this year's festival spotlights many debut features, it still recognizes the importance of shorts. "It's essential to have festivals that are geared more towards shorts, even as SAAFF grows," says Pai, who is a member of this year's programming committee. "It's important to maintain the infusion of short pieces, the rough pieces. They affect the content and direction of filmmakers as they become feature filmmakers."

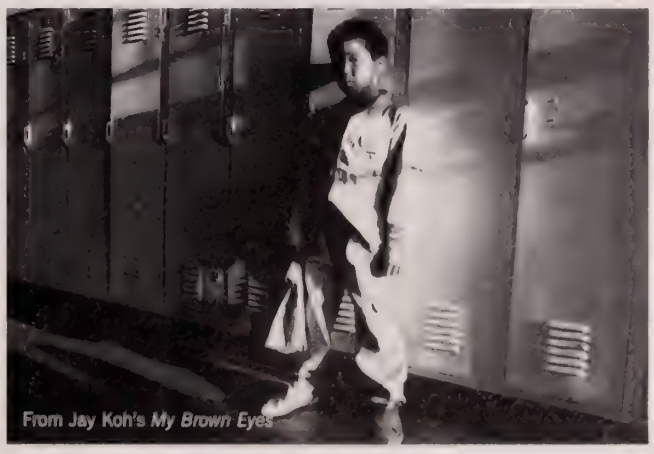
"Filmmakers like our festival because its smaller and more intimate," Blauvelt half-jokes. "We try to make up for our lack of money and size by being very nice to the filmmakers." It's a strategy that works. Lee-Park, whose short *Daughterline* played at the 1995 festival, comments, "The great thing about SAAFF is that it was really well run, really friendly. Maybe because it is all volunteer driven, everyone felt like a host. It made a lot of the out-of-town filmmakers feel at home."

Koh agrees. "Going from festival to festival, I really felt good about SAAFF. There was equal emphasis on all the films. At the bigger festivals, I just felt lost in the shuffle."

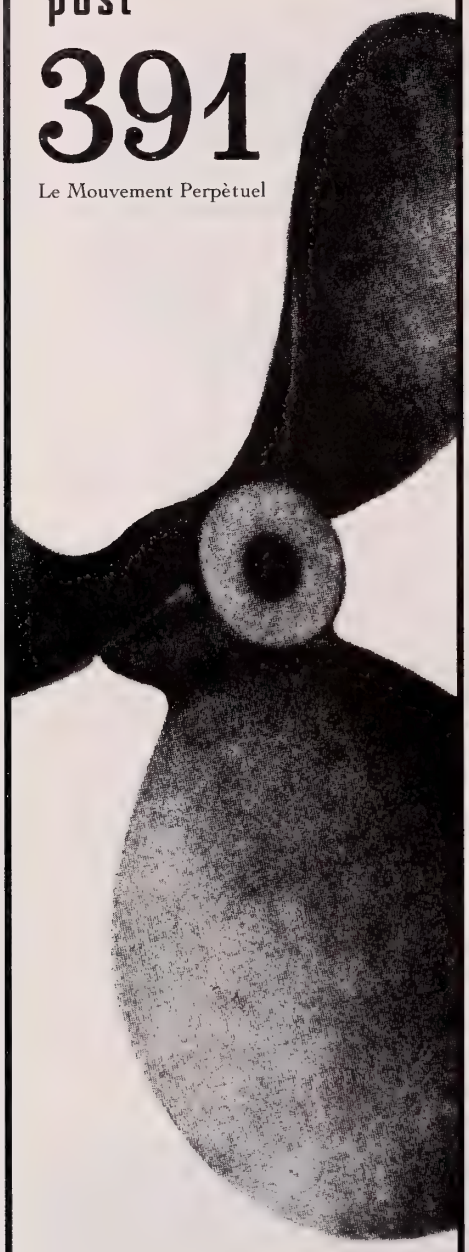
Wong credits the success of SAAFF to the all-volunteer staff, some of whom work 20 hours a week nine months a year. "There is a lot of community enthusiasm and a lot of support from the larger Seattle media," she says. "For being so young, we're doing really well."

But with the success of last year's festival, with its sold-out screenings and increased press attention, will SAAFF lose the elements that make it so appealing to independents? "We're at the crossroads," says Blauvelt. "What we do now will really determine if the festival can survive."

"We need to consider some paid positions to maintain the quality of the festival, to keep it going," says Wong. But since it will continue to rely on a strong volunteer core, its future as a community-based effort seems bright. And there's no lack of material to program. "There has been a real boom in Asian American filmmaking, particularly since the early nineties," says Blauvelt. "There is more stuff than we can possible show now."


From Jay Koh's *My Brown Eyes*

Shannon Gee is a freelance producer and writer. She resides in Seattle and is currently working on a video documentary for the Wing Luke Asian Museum and a documentary on vaudeville for PBS.

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WHERE TO SHOW

Film and video festivals must thrive in cool, damp climates.

COMPILED BY ROBIN REIDY OPPENHEIMER

NW FESTIVALS

OREGON

Northwest Film Center
1219 Southwest Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205-2486; (503) 221-1156; fax: 226-4842; contact: Howard Aaron. *Showcases throughout the year for all types of independent film, video & animation.*

The Film Center also handles these fests:

Northwest Film & Video Festival
Contact: Lisa Pearson. Held Nov. 1-10. *Premiere fest for Northwest mediamakers, juried fest showcases films and videos from Oregon, Washington, Montana, Alaska & British Columbia. $10,000 in cash & service awards.*

Portland International Film Festival
Contact: Bill Foster. Feb. 16 - March 3, 1997. *Annual invitational survey of new world cinema featuring over 50 films from more than 25 countries.*

Portland Jewish Film Festival
Contact: Howard Aaron. Jan./Feb., 1997; deadline mid-Nov. *International survey of films that explore Jewish history, culture & identity.*

Reel Music
Jan./Feb. 1997; deadline: mid-Nov. *Concert performances, docs & host of premieres featuring music on film.*

Young People's Film and Video Festival
Contact: Education Coordinator. Spring 1997. *Juried survey of film/video produced by young people (grades K-12) from OR, WA, ID, MT & AK.*

University of Oregon Queer Film Festival
Student Activities Resource Office, Erb Memorial Union, Ste. 2, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 98403; (541) 346-4000; fax: 346-4400; contact: Debby Martin. Feb. 1997. *Focuses on works re: queer life & issues. Fiction, doc, experimental, student work.*

WASHINGTON

Seattle Independent Film & Video Consortium members:

911 Media Arts Center
117 Yale Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 682-6552; fax: 682-7422; 911media@netquest.net; www.911media.org.; contact: Peter Mitchell. *Year-round screenings of independent film & video.*

Citizen Vagrom
2129 2nd Ave., Seattle WA 98121; (206) 344-6434; citizen@speakeasy.org; contact: Eric Galatas. *Mediamakers whose activities focus on grassroots efforts to reclaim voice and culture from corporate media.*

Films from Here
214 10th Ave., Seattle, WA; 98122; jjeffcoa@ linknet.kitsap.lib.wa.us; contact: John Jeffcoat. *Quarterly fest for rising talent in the Northwest. Focus on productions shot in 16mm, super-8, or 8mm.*

Independent Exposure
Speakeasy Cafe, 2304 2nd Ave., Seattle WA 98121; joel@speakeasy.org; www.lightlink.com/offline/Off-lineHome.html; contact: Joel Bachar. *Accepting ongoing submissions for curated monthly screening program of local, nat'l & int'l indie film, video & computer artists. Held 4th Thursday of each month.*

Nice Soft Rutabaga
TCI public access Channel 29; 432 Summit East, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 860-1719; chknbutt@compumedia.com, http://compumedia. com/~chknbutt; contact: Franklin Joyce. *Accepting ongoing submissions for quarterly screenings. Seeks alternative homegrown art, music videos, and films.*

Offline
TCI public access channel 29; (206) 543-8479; fax: 685-0668; snoegel@u.washington.edu; www.galivant.com; contact: Scott Noegel. *Features national & local films, videos & interviews. Airing 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m.*

Lucky Charm Awards
Lucky Charm Studio, #181, 2319 N. 45th St., Seattle, WA 98103 (206) 522-6195; contact: Kelly Hughes. Late Dec. *Focus on local, nat'l & int'l work shot on video that may not get screenings elsewhere.*

Museum of Flight Film & Video Festival
Museum of Flight, 9404 East Marginal Way, Seattle, WA 98109-4097; (206) 764-5700; fax: 764-5707; contact: Don Franks. April 1997; deadline: early Jan. *First attempt at a media festival with theme of "flight," defined as broadly as possible.*

Northwest Documentary Film Festival
Washington Commission for the Humanities, 615 Second Ave., Seattle, WA 98104-2200; (206) 682-1770; fax: 682-4158; contact: Lyall Bush. Nov. 1-3. *This is first media festival sponsored by the commission, with a broad focus on docs of all approaches & content.*

Northwest International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA 98505; (360) 866-6000, ext. 6542; fax: 866-6790. May 2-4; deadline: mid-March 1997. *Fest dedicated to representing & celebrating diverse complexity of gay & lesbian culture.*

Olympia Film Society
218 1/2 W. 4th Ave., Olympia, WA 98501; (360) 754-6670; ofs@olywa.net; www.olywa.net/ofs/ home. html. *Volunteer-run organization manages 700-seat theater showing independent feature films year-round.*

Olympia Film Festival
Olympia Film Society (see above address); contact: Devon Damonte. October. *Ten-day event presents new feature-length docs & dramas plus shorts.*

Rainy States Film Festival
1202 East Pike, Ste. 1240, Seattle, WA 98122-3934; (206) 322-3572; contact: Chip Phillips. Feb. 13-16 1997; deadline: Dec. 1. *Fest showcases Northwest indie filmmakers of all genres.*

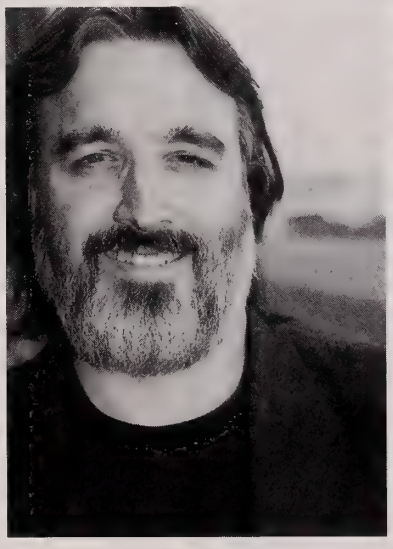
Seattle Asian American Film Festival
622 S. Washington St., Seattle, WA 98104; (206) 525-0892 (hotline); contact: Albert Shen (206) 517-4803. Nov. 9-11. *Showcases the work of Asian American film & videomakers,*

Continued on p. 44

PROFILE
KELLEY BAKER

From Vinton to Van Sant to the Baker Backyard

FROM THE GRAVEL PARKING LOT OFF PORTLAND'S INDUSTRIAL Front Avenue, it's 104 wearying wooden steps up to the third floor of the old U.S. Steel building, where Square One Productions has its office. It's a little chilly, a little dark, and a thousand miles from Hollywood, big budgets, and finicky directors. Kelley Baker calls it home.



Baker, 40, is an Oregon native who successfully juggles commercial and independent work. He has crewed for fellow Portlander Gus Van Sant, most recently as sound editor on *To Die For*. "We watched each other's stuff and talked about film," Baker says of their early relationship. This turned into work for Baker, starting with *My Own Private Idaho* and continuing with *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* and *To Die For*.

It was after Baker's last stint with Van Sant that he decided, at the director's urging, to "get out of the editing room." He's now developing a screenplay for a feature he hopes to produce, "having to do with a used car dealer and the Vanport [Oregon] flood of 1948." He is also continuing work on a documentary that's now 10 years in the making about activist Kaye Boyle, "the most dangerous woman in America," Baker says, "who has witnessed and written about every major event of the 20th century. She's also intimately acquainted with the federal prison system."

But Baker already has a long track record producing his own shorts and documentaries—poignant personal slices of family and everyday life filtered through the skewed and brutally honest Baker lens. These include *Obscure Object of Desire* (1989), *You'll Change* (1992), *Stolen Toyota* (1994), *Friday Night* (1995), and *Enough with the Salmon* (1996).

All of his work has the signature Baker twist—tongue-in-cheek, off-kilter. Baker's films are crafted from simple and mundane events in his life, but his storytelling makes each compelling. *Friday Night*, for example, is Baker's personal account of nearly dying from asthma. In the course of the eight-minute black-and-white film, Baker's starkly lit face fills the frame as he relates in harrowing detail his trip to the emergency room, how he was treated there, and the possibility he might never see his daughter again. There's no additional soundtrack or scenery, only Baker and the edge in his voice. Audiences tend to sit in stunned silence, the tension so palpable that it's hard to draw a breath. *Enough with the Salmon*, on the other hand, revisits the annual Baker family vacation, at least as he remembers it. All of his films are subtly understated but sharply poignant.

Baker balances that celluloid eloquence with more lucrative commercial work for a variety of clients. Regionally well-connected, Baker works San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland, with enough Los Angeles thrown in to keep his name alive in LaLaLand.

Baker began his career with his high school's lone video camera. "It was that huge, black-and-white, half-inch portapak that you had to have three men and a boy to carry around," he says. "But it was fun." His video instructor suggested he study it in college. "I thought, you can make a living doing this? I've since found out you can't," Baker says, chuckling.

That propelled him to the University of Oregon, where he burned through all the production classes. Still hungry, he headed for pre-*Star Wars* University of Southern California. "There were 500 applicants per semester for 40 slots," he recounts. Baker survived USC boot camp as his class dwindled to 20 in the first semester—a 50 percent dropout rate. "I made a lot of really bad movies," he admits. "But the important thing is you don't miss your deadlines. We got to play and make a ton of mistakes. That's how you learn."

One of the few to pursue documentaries, Baker was odd man out. All of the nouveau filmmakers "wanted to make a statement," Baker recalls. "I just wanted to make films to entertain people." The joke now is that all of Baker's classmates are making "schlocky Hollywood movies."

After several years, Baker returned to Portland in 1982 intent on independent filmmaking. "I really felt like my stuff was a little off-beat for Hollywood."

He found work with the burgeoning Will Vinton Studios. "Two weeks turned into two years," he says. What he learned there about sound design and editing led to staff jobs and frequenting commuting—by car—to L.A. for TV work on *Law and Order* and *Miami Vice*, and film work, including *Tales from the Dark Side*, *Mercenary Fighters* (with James Mitchum and Peter Fonda), *Adventures of Mark Twain*, and Susan Shadburne's *Shadowplay*.

"They're all classics," Baker says, laughing. "I don't have copies of any of them." Baker does proudly admit that *Tales of the Dark Side* contains his favorite piece of sound editing. The character was hired to kill a suspiciously evil cat, who may have already killed his sister. "It was an incredibly grotesque scene," Baker says. "I put a microphone right next to a piece of meat and made squishing sounds and broke some sticks for breaking bones. It's my favorite. It was apparently a big hit in the editing room."

But having brushed the big time, Baker still feels the need to do things his way, and so he keeps his home in Portland and his personal work going. "I get up in the morning and I like what I do," he says. "I think a lot of people can't say that. As artists, we don't have to grow up. You can lose yourself in films."

Square One Prod., Box 8322, Portland OR 97207.

DON CAMPBELL

Don Campbell is a freelance writer and editor in Portland, Oregon.

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SWEET EAST 60'S LOCATION

WHERE TO SHOW: continued from p. 42

NW FESTIVALS

Seattle International Film Festival
Egyptian Theater, 801 E. Pine St., Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 324-9996; fax: 342-9998; contact: Carl Spence. Mid-May thru early June 1997; deadline: March 1. *Mammoth event among the top film festivals in the world, with over 150 filmmakers attending.*

Tacoma Tortured Artists Film Festival
Club 7 Studios, 728A Pacific Ave., Tacoma, WA 98402; (888) 202-5827 or (206) 627-5932; fax: (206) 627-1525; contact: Kristen Revis. Fall. *1996 was first edition of fest, devoted to multi-genre, short films & videos.*

Videoshorts
Box 20369; Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010; contact: Mike Cady. Last weekend in April; deadline: Feb. 1, 1997. *Devoted exclusively to video short form (max. length 6 min.), fest now in its 17th year.*

Women in Cinema Film Festival
Egyptian Theater, 801 E. Pine St., Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 324-9996; fax: 342-9998. Contact: Carl Spence. Jan. 1997. *Second edition of fest. Features works by women from around globe. Panel discussions with makers that focus on issues affecting women working in cinema.*

VANCOUVER, CANADA

B.C. Festival of the Arts-Student Film & Video Festival
Cascadia Moving Images Association , RR4 S-7 C-13, Gibsons, BC V0N IV0; (604) 886-3269; fax (604) 886-3213. May 1997; deadline: April 1. *Competitive festival, primarily for students. Now open to independent film & videomakers. All genres, all lengths.*

The Cinematheque
1131 Howe St., Vancouver, BC V6Z 2L7; (604) 688-8202; contact: Jamie Furlong. *Year-round screenings of independent films, including hosting of festivals.*

Edison Electric
916 Commercial Dr., Vancouver BC V5L 3W7; (604) 255-4162; www.wimsey.com/=panic/edison. html; contact: Alex Mackenzie. *Screenings of alternative and underground film & video.*

Out on Screen Queer Film & Video Festival
Box 521, 1027 Davie St., Vancouver B.C. V6E 4L2; (604) 879-9296. Summer 1997; deadline: April 1. *Festival draws together best independent queer shorts, videos, animation, docs & selected features. This will be fest's 8th year.*

Rough and Ruined FEAST
110 West Hastings St., Vancouver, BC V6B 1G8; (604) 685-0509; contact: Tina Einofski. Mid-August.
In its first year, FEAST was noncompetitive fest for super-low-budget, cult & kitsch 8mm & 16mm film.

Vancouver International Film Festival
1008 Homer St., #410, Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 2X1; (604) 688-8221; viff@viff.org; website: viff.org/viff/; contact: Chris Adkins. October. *400 screenings of 250 films from 45 countries for 120,000 attendees. 1996 fest included Trade Forum w/ panels about independent mediamaking in Canada.*

Video In
1965 Main St.; Vancouver, BC V5T 3C1; (604) 872-8337; fax: 876-1185; contact: Ken Anderlini. *Year-round screenings of independent video.*

Western Front
303 E. 8th Ave., Vancouver BC V5T 1F1; (604) 876-9343. [See story page 29.]

VICTORIA, CANADA

Victoria Independent Short Film & Video Festival
#302 - 602 Broughton St., Victoria, BC V8W 1C7; (604) 384-0184; fax: 385-3327. Late March 1997; deadline: late Jan. *Noncompetitive fest for all genres.*

PROFILE
JAMES WESTBY

Low Budget's Professor-at-Large

PORTLAND FILMMAKER JAMES WESTBY'S SECOND feature, *Bloody Mary*, is a comedy of errors, most of them fatal. With screenings this year at festivals in New York, Chicago, and Seattle as well as a self-booked tour of the Northwest, his film is finding an audience. But for now, this 24-year-old director is best known for his thoughts on do-it-yourself feature-filmmaking in the '90s.

His wryly instructive article on "Budget-Lite" filmmaking was published in *MovieMaker* magazine and is quoted in John Pierson's *Spike, Mike, Slackers & Dykes* as the voice of a new wave of independents: "I fear my generation of filmmakers will come to be known as the credit card kids. These films are working as springboards to successful careers. The filmmakers to whom this has happened are big jerks. Spoiled brats. They think they're on top of the world, what with their film festivals and three-picture deals. And oh, how we all want to be just like them."

Or does he? Speaking for himself and his wife/co-writer Megan Westby, he cheerfully speculates, "*Bloody Mary* may be the most commercial movie we'll ever make." The couple first collaborated on campy 8mm horror movies in the early '90s, then James planned to go to film school. However, the high price of tuition convinced him to make a movie instead. The Westbys moved to Portland, where they tapped the resources of the Northwest Film Center, borrowed ten grand from a relative, and shot a pared-down version of their already completed script *Subculture*.

The common bond between their first and second features is the existential apathy of youth. The characters in *Subculture* wallow in it, and the film's deserted warehouse-district settings and deadpan dialogue makes it feel a little like a Beckett play. *Bloody Mary*'s anti-heroes aren't as passive. Of their murderous scheme, Westby says, "They are battling apathy by creating this situation." Though shot in color and set in the present, *Bloody Mary* is suffused with shades of film noir. Westby cites Billy Wilder, Joseph H. Lewis and B-movie king Roger Corman as inspirational figures, providing lessons in simple and effective lighting and camera setups, as well as giving him license to create quirky and theatrical dialogue that serves as a stylistic element.

"A lot of people think I just watch *Blood Simple* or something and say, 'Yeah, I'll make a movie like that,' but that's never the case," says Westby. "There are people that work that way—their movies are just constant nods to other movies. To me that's pathetic—there's no life being lived there."



Filmmaking husband-and-wife team James and Megan Westby. Courtesy filmmaker

The films he admires are more of a point of departure. *Bloody Mary*'s tagline, "old drink, new twist," might refer to its fresh take on the classic plot line immortalized in *Double Indemnity* and *They Live by Night*, in which an adulterous couple knocks off the woman's husband.

We meet Mona and her screwball boyfriend, Val, waiting in a car by the side of the road. They're waiting for Mona's molesting stepfather to jog by so they can run him over. In the old movies, the murder comes off without a hitch and trouble arises in the aftermath. However, these two are neither smooth nor passionate enough to finish the job. Their victim escapes with a ruptured spleen. After that it's one bungle after another as Val and his dimwitted brother kill all the wrong people.

The Westbys' relationship with actor Melik Malkasian (who plays Val as a greasy '70s-bad-guy of ambiguous ethnicity) is taking their work in new directions. They are currently seeking funds for *Anoosh of the Airways*, in which Malkasian will play a Buster Keaton-like figure who leaves Armenia for a U.S. education when he outgrows his career as a poster child for an airline. Living with a suburban family, he negotiates the absurdities of the American Dream and the American reality.

That's more or less what the filmmakers themselves are negotiating, with more than $10,000 of credit card debt and a script that is ready to shoot. Westby's advice? "Have patience, have fun, lower your expectations, increase your stamina. And forget about luck. Perseverance and talent are your meat and potatoes. Luck only determines when the meal is served."

James Westby, 2229 NW Everett #9, Portland OR 97201; (503) 228-5353.

HEATHER VAN ROHR

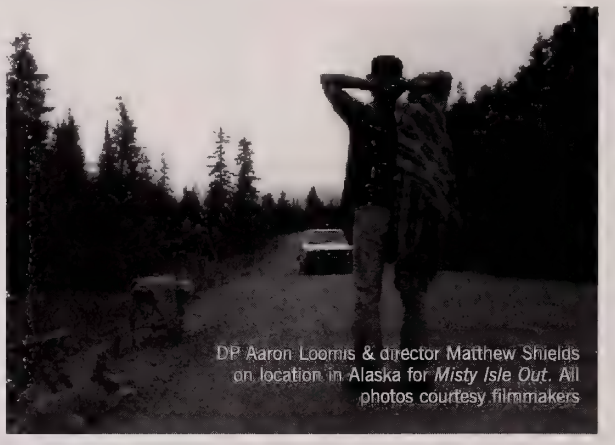
Heather Van Rohr is a writer and filmmaker living in Portland, Oregon.

IN & OUT OF PRODUCTION IN THE NORTHWEST

BY COURTNEY PORTER

The Last Big Thing (98 min., 35 mm) certainly isn't the first big thing David Barnett has directed. It follows the success of his short films *Conjurer of Monikers* and *Now Renting*, which played at Sundance and the Film Arts Festival, respectively. The feature is set in Los Angeles and tells the tale of Simon Geist, a strange and disturbed "zeitgeist" figure in his early thirties who has started a magazine called *The Next Big Thing*. It's hip and it's hot, except for one thing: the magazine doesn't actually exist. However, it serves as an excellent excuse to conduct interviews that confront and insult actors, models, musicians, and stand-up comics. Geist's antics inspire chronicling by Darla, who worships Geist and creates an actual underground publication dedicated to his ideas. However, Geist's agenda of lashing out at '90s culture deteriorates when he falls for a beautiful model. *The Last Big Thing*, David Barnett, 2539 Walnut Lp. NW, Olympia, WA 98502; (360) 352-7206.

The Restlessness of Water (98 min., 16 mm) illustrates the process of self-empowerment as the serendipitous outcome of a surprising turn of events. Madeline, a woman obsessed with water, gives up her dreams of becoming a yacht designer to marry her boyfriend, Jay. When the marriage falters, Madeline and Jay go on a second honeymoon. While Jay is fishing, Madeline picks up Kate, a woman on the road who says that she has been dumped on the highway by her boyfriend. Later, Madeline finds Kate and Jay making love in the barn and discovers that Kate is in fact Jay's mistress. In the process of losing her marriage, friendship, love, and self-control, Madeline grows up and finally does what she wants to do. *The Restlessness of Water*, Jessica Bradford, Roaming Productions, 204-175 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver B.C. Canada, V5Y 1R7; (604) 874-3697.



DP Aaron Loomis & director Matthew Shields on location in Alaska for *Misty Isle Out*. All photos courtesy filmmakers



Michael & Vince, from *Vincent: 'the junkie chronicles"*

4/4 Time (60 min., Beta SP) explores the lives of young men incarcerated at Green Hill School, a maximum security juvenile correction facility in Chehalis, Washington. The men talk about choices they've made, lessons they've learned the hard way, drug and alcohol abuse, dropping out of school, gang-banging, growing up without fathers, and the meaning of cultural heritage. Produced by Heather Dew Oaksen, *4/4 Time* began in 1994 as part of an Artist Residency developed in partnership with Green Hill School and Washington State Historical Museum's Experimental Gallery Program. In 1995, Oaksen was hired to develop a video program at Green Hill. She spent three days a week teaching video art as a tool for increased self-expression and collaborated with residents to create their own tapes about life "inside." At the same time, she began shooting her own documentary and doing multiple interviews with participants. *4/4 Time* is a vehicle for kids to learn about other kids' experiences and the consequences of their choices. *4/4 Time*, Heather Dew Oaksen, 1937 11th East, Seattle, WA 98102, (206) 323-5507.

Promising "a taut ride through the sexual subconscience [sic] of a lonely urban woman," ***Threshold*** (18 min., 16 mm) is "an erotic mystery" with a plot that reads like a half-remembered dream. It's appropriate, then, that at the start of the film Carson wakes to find a key—a piece of a disturbing dream—on her bedroom floor. This is her first clue to a mystery that continues with a phone call that leads her through a threshold to the world of her fantasies, where she encounters angels and androgynous creatures. Finally, it's daytime, everything has changed, and a woman is tiling a floor that Carson never saw in the darkness of her fan-

tasies. The answers reveal themselves as Carson finds the key, unlocks the door, and solves the mystery. *Threshold,* Nikki Apino, House of Dames Productions, 1732 15th Ave, Suite 12, Seattle, WA 948122; (206) 720-1729.

If you thought *Trainspotting* was too much, you'll be blown away by ***Vincent: "the junkie chronicles."*** (85 min., 16mm) A documentary film by Michael Failla, the film weaves together interview segments with Vincent and flashback reenactments that track the progression of his heroin abuse. The painful, increasingly difficult and degrading process of finding a place on Vincent's body to inject is depicted in the harsh and unforgiving light of the camera, along with the dark and dirty details of life as an addict. The decline of Vincent, once one of the biggest stars of the Seattle restaurant scene, is chronicled from the time that Vincent used heroin to relax on weekends to his eventual addiction. Interspersed throughout the film are lessons on physical decay by a "Professor," illustrated by the Visible Body from high school biology class. "*the junkie chronicles*" could make anyone rethink heroin's role as a fashionable drug of choice. *Vincent: "the junkie chronicles,"* Big Tuna Productions c/o Michael Failla, 2365 Franklin Ave East, unit B, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 329-8112.

Shot entirely on location in the fishing and logging town of Ketchikan, Alaska, ***Misty Isle Out*** (75 min., 16mm) is the story of a group of people trying to come to terms with the death of one of their friends. According to producer Matthew Shields, the film is a portrait of the lives, industry, and environment of the Alaskan Panhandle. Set in the fictional town of Sayles (named for legendary American independent filmmaker John Sayles), the drama portrays the issues surrounding death through the physical isolation of the environment. Sayles is 100 miles by plane from the nearest highway and serves to mirror the characters' isolation. The film also raises political issues such as



Filmmaker Marco Mascarin in *My Native Self*. Photo: Ron Peltier

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IN & OUT

the conflicts between developers and environmentalists, as well as between native people and more recent arrivals to Alaska. *Misty Isle Out,* Misty Isle Productions, 12544 37th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 948125; (206) 365-8417.


Amy Caton Ford as Carson in *Threshhold*

Ruth Neuwald Falcon, winner of an Emmy Award for video editing, conducts an exploration of African-Americans and Jews in her nonfiction production, ***Something in Common? A Portrait in Black and Jewish*** (60 min., Beta SP and high-8). Shot in Los Angeles, the work begins shortly after the riots in South Central L.A. and focuses on a pastor, a rabbi, and three women who met while helping feed the hungry. The work explores their relationships with one another and with each other's communities. *Something in Common? A Portrait in Black and Jewish,* RST Productions, 8053 30th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115-4723; (206) 526-1645.

Filmmaker Marco Mascarin documents his own story in ***My Native Self*** (76 min., Beta SP, 16 mm). Mascarin became a student of David Forlines, a traditional leader and carver on the Quileute reservation in LaPush, Washington. At first, he was in awe of Forlines and his plans to bring the cedar canoes back to the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest, but his awe turned to confusion when he learned that Forlines is HIV positive and ashamed of his sexuality as a gay male. Forline's final wish before he succumbs to AIDS is for an "international canoe" to be paddled to an Indigenous Peoples gathering in northern British Columbia. The canoe was to be paddled by people of diverse ethnic heritages to celebrate the acceptance of differences. While paddling the canoe, Mascarin discovered that he was not making a film about canoes or native culture, but rather documenting his own confusion and struggle to find a place and an identity. *My Native Self,* Marco Mascarin, 2201 Broadway E., Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 324-6294.

Courtney Porter is editorial assistant at The Independent.

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BY KATHRYN BOWSER

SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 1ST OF THE MONTH, 2 1/2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., DEC. 15 FOR MARCH ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED.

DOMESTIC

ATLANTA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, GA. Presented by media arts center IMAGE, competitive fest founded in 1976 and dedicated to innovative, entertaining productions. $7,000 in cash, services & equipment awarded in several cats; film & video awarded separately. Film: Grand Jury Award, Best Doc, Best Experimental, Best Narrative, Best Animation, Best Student, Southeastern Film & Video Makers Award. Video: Juror's Award for Achievement and Best Doc, Experimental, Narrative, Student, Animation, plus many others that judges create. All work must be independent & must have been completed since Jan. 1 of preceding 2 yrs. Sponsored works (industrials, commercials, etc.) ineligible. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8, 8mm. Entry fee: $40 (individual/nonprofit); $30 IMAGE members/students; $50 (distributor/for profit); add $5 for foreign. Deadline: Mid Jan. Contact: Anne Hubbell, fest director, Atlanta Film & Video Festival, IMAGE Film/Video Center, 75 Bennett St., Ste. N1, Atlanta, GA 30307; (404) 352-4254; fax: (404) 352-0173.

CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, late March-early April, OH CIFF is one of Cleveland's premiere film events. Presents approx. 60 new feature films from around world in various cats & more than 100 short subjects presented in collected programs. Film Forums follow selected films, giving audiences opportunity to discuss films w/ filmmakers, critics & other guest panelists. Audiences estimated at 25,000. Entries submitted (VHS preview) must have been completed within previous 2 yrs & not previously submitted. In recent yrs, cash awards of $500 have been presented for Best Short, Student Short, Ohio Short, African-American Short, Women's Short, & Doc Short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry Fee: $35 shorts, $60 features. Deadline: Nov. 30. Contact: Angie Stetzy, Entry Coordinator, Cleveland Int'l Film Festival, 1621 Euclid Avenue, Ste. 428, Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 623-0400; fax: (216) 623-0103.

FILM FEST NEW HAVEN, April, CT. First fest held in April '96, this is Connecticut's first broadly based annual int'l fest of independent film & video. Goal of fest is to expose audiences to work of new, innovative filmmakers & to provide those filmmakers an opportunity to secure wider distribution. Competitive & non-competitive sections. 50-75 films (20-25 features) planned for 1997. All categories eligible. Entry fee: $25. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Deadline: Mid-Jan. Contact: Wayne F. Buck, Film Fest New Haven, 111 Clinton Ave., New Haven, CT 06513; tel/fax; (203) 865-2773; Film_Fest_New_Haven@compuserve.com; http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Film_Fest_New_Haven

HUDSON VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL, April, NY. This fest accepts features, shorts, docs, & screenplays. Special cat w/ deadline of Dec. 31 accepts films under 20 mins, w/ opportunity to have film scored by H.V. Philharmonic Music Director Randall Craig Fleischer & performed live by H.V. Philharmonic. Deadline for fest: Feb. 1. Contact: Denise Kasell, Hudson Valley Film & Video Office, 40 Garden St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; (914) 473-0318; fax: (914) 473-0082.

HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL WATCH FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY & CA. Fest created "to enhance public awareness of domestic & int'l human rights issues & specific human rights abuses, drawing on the power of film to communicate across borders, both physical & ideological." Entries may be any length & are selected on basis of artistic merit & "sophistication with which they confront human rights issues." In 1992 fest estab Nestor Almendros prize of $5,000 for filmmaker in recognition of distinguished contribution to human rights & in 1995 estab Irene Diamond Lifetime Achievement Award. 1995 was first yr fest collaborated w/ Film Society of Lincoln Center, holding screenings at Walter Reade Theater; it also has collaborated w/ African Film Festival & Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture & Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. The High School Project, affiliated w/ fest, is dedicated to bringing global awareness of universal human rights into classroom via film; fest staff works w/ social studies teachers in NY area & FilmFree in Netherlands, formed to protect rights of filmmakers. Fest also features "Global Showcase" which travels to cities around world throughout yr. Formats; 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Late Dec. Contact: Bruni Burres, fest director & Heather Harding, assoc. dir., Human Rights Watch Film Festival, Human Rights Watch, 485 Fifth Ave., 3rd Fl, New York, NY 10017; (212) 972-8400; fax (212) 972-0905; burresb@hrw.org or hardinh@hrw.org; http: www.hrw.org iff.

LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Apr. 3-7, CA. Showcases "best in independent film from throughout the country." Full-length feature films, shorts & docs, completed after Jan. 1, 1995. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" VHS. Deadline: Jan. 10. Contact: Robert Faust, Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, 650 N. Bronson Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90004; (213) 937-9137; fax 213-851-7337; http://www.laiff.com.

MADCAT WOMEN'S FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, date TBA. New fest seeks innovative/challenging film/video works, all lengths/genres, completed after 9/94. Deadline: Nov. 15. Formats: screening, 3/4", 1/2", and 16mm; preview 1/2". Fee: $10, payable to WiseGirl Productions. Contact: WiseGirl Productoins, 937 Fell Street, San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 436-9523 or 826-6017.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA NETWORK COMPETITION, March, CA. Now in its 27th yr, fest is recognized as a foremost U.S. competition for educational media. It serves as conduit for high quality films, videos & multimedia programs to schools & universities, libraries, broadcast outlets, institutional & consumer markets worldwide. Eligible programs incl docs, live action programs, dramatic features & shorts, animation, children's programs, training/instructional tapes, special interest videos, interactive CD-ROMs, broadcast & cable programs, public service announcements & student made features & shorts. Several cats, which each incl. several sub-cats, incl. Arts; Business & Nonprofits; Careers; Health; History/Political Science; Human Relations; Multimedia; Science & Technology; Society; Sports, Leisure/Travel; Teaching/Education; Television/Cable Broadcast. All entries viewed by panel of over 600 volunteer jurors, including category-specific professionls & educators. Films, videos & multimedia programs must have been completed since Jan.1 of preceding 2 yrs. Student Competition recognizes original student work, made w/out professional assistance. Gold, Silver & Bronze Apple winners listed in annual NEMN Catalog of Winners, publication sent free of charge to major institutional media buyers throughout U.S. & Canada. National Educational Media Market held in May hosts over 50 nontheatrical distribs, publishers & broadcasters from throughout world to view some 300 new available nontheatrical programs. Fest sends press releases to nat'l & int'l press & to worldwide media organizations. Competition entry fee: $45-$160. Deadline: Dec. 1. Deadline for submission to the market is mid April; entry fees: $80/entry & $40/productions already entered in competition. Formats: 1/2", CD-ROM. Contact: Jean Paul Petraud, competition director, Nat'l Educational Media Network Comp., 655 Thirteenth St., Oakland, CA 94612-1220; (510) 465 6885; fax: (510) 465-2835; e-mail: nemn@aol.com.

PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 13-Mar. 3. Non-competitive fest focuses primarily on work from outside the US, but American features, docs & shorts are included. No entry form. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Deadline: early November. Contact: Portland Int'l Film Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156, fax: (503) 226-4842.

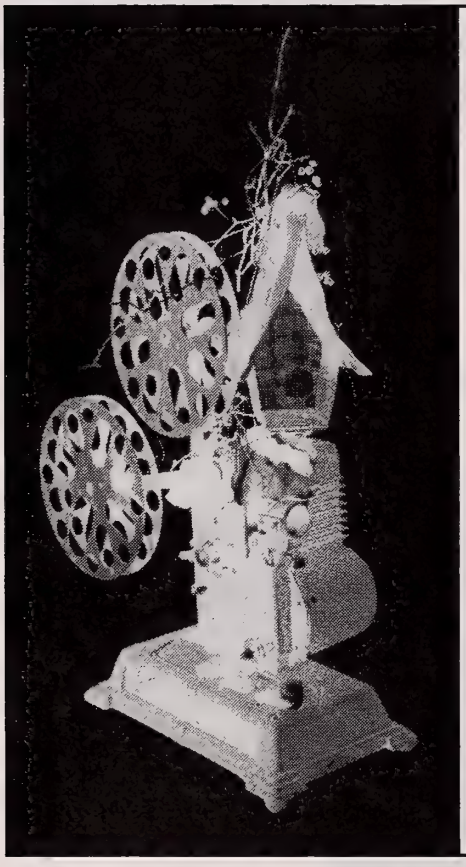
SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 24-May 8. Founded in 1957, this is oldest fest of its kind in western hemisphere, presented each spring by San Francisco Film Society. It showcases approx. 150 new feature films, docs & shorts, fest dedicated to highlighting current trends in int'l film, video & moving-image production, w/ emphasis on work w/out U.S. distribution. Fest sections invitational, non-competitive section for recent narrative features, archival presentations, retros & special awards &

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GÖTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL, February. Sweden. Noncompetitive 10-day fest celebrates its 20th edition in 1997. Scandinavia's most important fest, one of largest in northern Europe. Official national fest in collaboration w/ The Swedish Film Institute; 318 films, 125 features, 156 shorts & 37 docs were shown in 1996. Designed to give the public an opportunity to see films reflecting current state of world cinema outside conventional distribution forms, give Scandinavian distributors chance to discover & buy films from smaller production/distribution companies, widen cinema repertoire &, promote films as comment on social & cultural life. Entries should be Swedish premieres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: Early Nov. Contact: Gunnar Bergdahl, festival director, Göteborg Film Festival, Box 7079, S40232 Göteborg, Sweden; tel: 011 46 314105 46; fax: 011 46 314100 63.

LOCAL HEROES INTERNATIONAL SCREEN FESTIVAL, March, Canada. This fest has several components, including Workshops (present case studies of current issues facing Canadian filmmakers); and Declarations of Independents (a selection of films from across Canada that reflect a national perspective from emerging filmmakers). Local Heroes brings independent films from around the world to fest. Drama Prize is 16-month professional development program, aimed at developing the skills of emerging filmmakers; for each of 6 teams selected nationally, it offers cash & services production incentive to make short dramatic film, partnering each team w/ established filmmaker from their region as mentor. Local Exposure is Alberta's only home video competition. Fest launched in 1986. Formats 1/2". Entry fee: $20. Deadline: Mid Dec. Contact: Jan Miller, exec. dir., Local Heroes Int'l Screen Festival, 10022 - 103rd Street, 3rd Floor, Edmonton, AB, Canada T5J 0X2; (403) 421-4084; fax: (403) 425-8098.

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, April 7-13, Canada. Formerly Montreal Young Cinema Festival, fest is dedicated to short films w/ mission of promoting & supporting production & release of short films in Canada & abroad. Fest has 9 sections. Competitive sections incl Int'l Competition (fiction, doc, experimental), Int'l Animation Competition, Quebec Univ. Competition & Quebec College Competition. Non-competitive sections incl Quebec Panorama, Tribute to a Filmmaker, The Great's Shorts, The Long Night of the Short & School Matinees. Awards (Intl Competition): Grand Prize ($2,000), Societe Radio-Canada Prize (purchase of broadcasting rights of Grand Prize), Best Screenplay, Youth Prize, Public Prize, CFP Prize (theatrical release of Quebec short film before feature film). Animation Competition: Grand Prize ($1,000), TV5 Kaleidoscope Prize (purchase of broadcasting rights), Public Prize, Quebec Prize. Quebec College Competition: Best College Film Prize. Long Night of the Short: Public Prize for the most delirious film. Addtl prizes may be awarded. About 168 films screened each yr before audiences estimated at more than 7,000. Entries must have been completed within previous yr w/ max running time of 35 min. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $30. Deadline: Dec. 6. Contact: Bernard Boulad, artistic director, Festival International du Court Metrage de Montreal, 4205, rue Saint Denis, Bureau 326. Montreal Quebec, Canada H7J 2K9; tel: (514) 285-4515; fax: (514) 285-2886.



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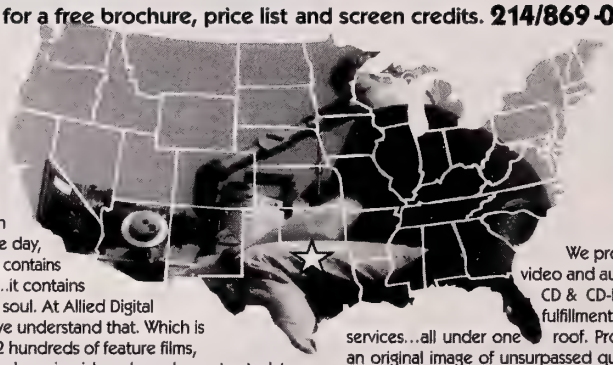
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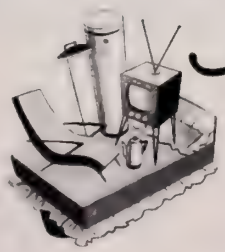
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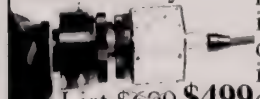
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HIP FLICK'S SCREENWRITING COMPETITION accepting entries through 1/3/97. Entrants notified by 3/31/97. Top 10 scripts receive cash awards. Winners eligible for possible production &/or option deal w/ company. Entry fee: $30. SASE to: Hip Flicks, Box 8867, Atlanta, GA 30306-08647; (770) 418-1293; hipflix@atl.mindspring.com; www.mindspring.com /hipflix.

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION announces 1997 screenwriting competition. $1,500 top prize. Contest open to writers who haven't yet earned money writing for TV or film. Submit 90-130 pg film or TV scripts. Entry fee: $40/script, multiple submits accepted. Deadline: Jan 10. Send SASE to: MCFCSC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942-0111; (408) 646-0910.

NATIONAL WRITERS WORKSHOP SCREENPLAY CONTESTS incl. Ethnic Minority Contest (for minorities only) & National Screenplay Contest, (open to all). Winners receive $500. Deadline: Dec. 31. For info, send SASE to: NWW, Box 36E79, LA, CA 90036, or call (213) 933-9232.

SCREENWRITING COMPETITION from Monterey County Film Commission. First prize: $1500. Deadline: 1/10/97. Entry fee: $40. For rules: SASE to MCFC, P.O. Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942.

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GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for *Living With AIDS*, half-hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, Living with AIDS Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

IN SHORT, a 1/2-hr program that airs bi-monthly, seeks submissions for public access show in NY. Preference given to works created w/ digital video. On every 4th program, work produced by or featuring women highlighted. Works up to 28 min., submitted on VHS for preview, available in 3/4". Send sub. to: In Short, 240 East 27th St., Suite 17N, NY, NY 10016; (212) 689-0505.

INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, monthly screening program seeks experimental, avant-garde, doc, narrative. Possible monetary renumeration. Submit your films and/or videos on 1/2" or 8mm video. Clearly label tapes with title, length, name, address & phone. Include SASE if you wish tapes returned. Contact: Blackchair Prod., 2318 Second Ave., #313A Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 282-3592; joel@speakeasy.org.

LA VOZ LATINA III: LATINA/O VIDEO ART FROM THE U.S.A. Looking for videos by Latinas/os (inclusive term that describes Chicanos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Caribbeans, Central/South Americans, etc., from the U.S.) for possible inclusion in curated program of video tapes to be presented at the Festival Internacional de Video del Cono Sur taking place in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay and the Festival de Cine Latinoamericano in Italy during 1997. Deadline: Jan. 10, 1997. Send VHS preview w/ description, reviews, resume, bio & SASE for return of tape to: Luis Valdovino, Ass't Professor, Fine Arts Dept., Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309; (303) 492-5482; fax: (303) 4924886.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MEDIA COMPETITION looking for entries. Film/video deadline: Dec. 1. For entry forms: (510) 465-6885 or fax (510) 465-2835.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic *Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

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The Film program in the department of Art Media Studies, College of Visual and Performing Arts, Syracuse University, is seeking to fill 2 tenure track positions in Film. Applicants should be able to teach all levels of 16mm Filmmaking, courses in Film History, and Film Theory.

The applicants must have strong technical skills and interests, and be excited by working in a Film program noted for narrative and experimental production in co-existence with film studies. Applicants will also assist in the overall operation of the Film program. The department of Art Media Studies includes BFA & MFA programs in Video, Photography, and Computer Graphics.

This film position requires a candidate with MFA with, preferably, two or more years of teaching beyond graduate assistant level.

All applicants should send a letter describing their background and interests in film, a resume, and a film portfolio on video tape and at least three letters of recommendation by January 10, 1997.

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Owen Shapiro, Chairman, Film Search Committee; Syracuse University; Art Media Studies; 102 Shaffer Art Bldg.; Syracuse, NY 13244-1210

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film artists who have produced films about Robeson, or would consider doing so. DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, IL 60637; (312) 373-0994, fx (708) 386-2414.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast. Submit to: Edge TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

SUPER-8 FILM OPPORTUNITY Send previews of short films no more than 20 min. on VHS or super-8 prints. Enclose short bio, description, running time, filmography & any stills or portraits you have. Enclose $5, SASE, and self-addressed stamped postcard. Send previews ASAP to: Barbara Rosenthal, 727 Ave. of Americas, NY, NY 10010-2712; (212) 924-4893.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TV-1 PRODUCTIONS seeking footage on Cuba for upcoming doc. Every aspect of life in the island welcome. Formats: Hi8, SVHS, 3/4", Beta, DVD, 8mm & 16mm. Tapes returned. Payment negotiable. For more info, contact: Marcos N. Suarez, 2102 Empire Central, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 357-2186.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to: Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre and length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi 8 or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone & SASE to: VideoSpace, attn: general submissions, 9 Myrtle St, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hour weekly show w/ videos followed by info on the makers. Send VHS or SVHS to: *World of Insanity*, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

APERTURE INC., a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers grant of $10,000 to first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. For info on 1996 Aperture Grant, send SASE to: Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on ongoing basis. Contact BF/VF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 536-3576; bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problems; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from: PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax: 591-1114; piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr: $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports ind. doc. film & video on human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. 2 levels considered: works-in-progress & preproduction seed money. Grant awards for recommended works-in-progress range up to $50,000, w/ average of $25,000. Awards for seed funds range from $10,000 to $15,000. Send proposals to: Diane Weyermann, Director of Arts and Cultural Regional Program, Open Society Institute, 888 7th Ave., #3100, NY, NY 10106.

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postprod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER dedicated to educators interested in video technology as learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video penpal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact: Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER

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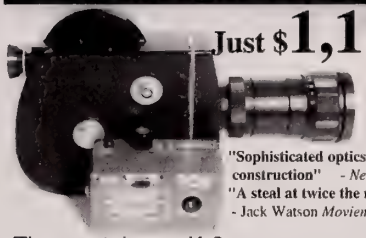
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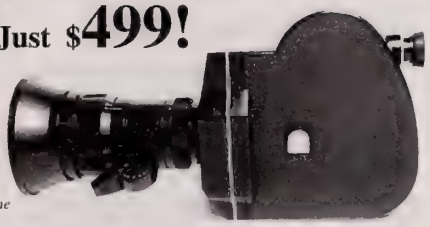
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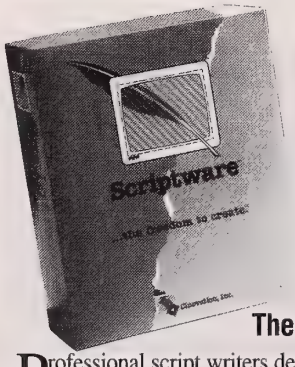
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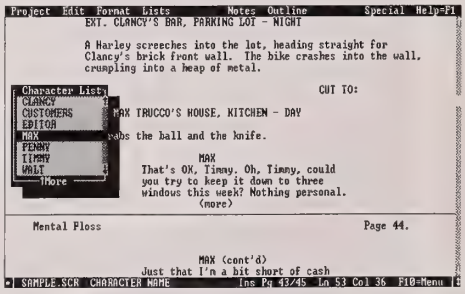
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The results of the summer's election are in, and we welcome new board members **Jim McKay** and **Peter Lewnes**, joining **Loni Ding** and **Bart Weiss** who were re-elected, all for three-year terms. We also welcome first alternate **Cynthia Lopez** to the board. She will replace **James Klein,** who resigned on September 1. Many thanks to the volunteers who contributed an evening to counting the ballots: *Latrice Dixon*, *Michael Grabowski*, *Helen Haug*, *Karen Lam*, and *Laurie Wen*.

STAFF NEWS

We would like to thank **Pamela Calvert** for three years of dedicated and innovative service to AIVF. Although we will miss her wisdom, guidance and incredible wit, we wish her much luck and success. We also want to thank our summer intern, **Michael Fulmer**, who spent many hours updating festival information for inclusion into the database. We wish him good luck as he returns to the University of Texas in Austin for his third year of studies in film and video.

FALL EVENTS

ADVOCACY FORUM

AIVF and Libraries for the Future (LFF) will hold an advocacy forum on the *Broadcast Spectrum Giveaway* debate. Guest speakers include *Sam Husseini*, FAIR; *Jamie McClelland*, LFF; and *Mike Eisenmenger*, Rutgers University. *Contact:* Cynthia Lopez at (212) 682-7446 for more information. Please call AIVF's RSVP line (212) 807-1400 x301 to reserve a spot.
When: Wednesday, December 4, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office

OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

AIVF members are eligible to submit nonfiction works-in-progress to the NewCity's DocuClub for screening. *Reservations necessary to attend screenings: (212) 753-9630 x 171.*

When: Monday, Nov. 4, 7 p.m.

Where: NewCity Prod., 635 Madison Ave., Suite 1101 (between 59 & 60 St.)

To submit work: Susan Kaplan, (212) 753-1326

AIVF ON THE ROAD—PACIFIC NORTHWEST

To celebrate this issue of *The Independent*, AIVF Executive Director Ruby Lerner will be traveling to the region to meet local media makers. The following events have been scheduled: **Portland**: Saturday, November 2nd, 4:30-6:30, Portland Art Museum. Contact Lisa Pearson, (503) 221-1156. **Vancouver**: Thursday evening, November 7, Video In. Contact: Margaret Gallagher, (604) 872-8468. **Seattle**: Friday evening, November 8th, 911 Media Center. Contact: Peter Mitchell, (206) 682-6552.

3RD ANNUAL AIVF HOLIDAY PARTY



Save the date! Come celebrate our third annual Holiday Party.. To RSVP call (212) 807-1400 x301.
When: Dec. 9, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

We are pleased to announce two new discounts, including our first in Washington, DC!

Five Star Film and Video offers AIVF members a 15% discount (20% to nonprofits) on all video production services including shooting, editing and distribution. *Five Star Film and Video, (202) 232-3605. Contact: Carolyn Projansky.*

Los Angeles-based **Sudborough Productions** is offering a 50% discount on 1" editing and production, portable 1" deck and camera, film and lighting equipment, and post-sound studio. *Sudborough Productions, (818) 895-1194 ; Contact: Ric Sudborough.*

To offer a service that will benefit AIVF members call, Leslie Fields (212) 807-1400 x222.

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6 pm
Where: Border Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 pm.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 pm.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Denver, CO
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

Houston, TX:
When: Last Wednesday of each month, 7 pm.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: David Mendel, (713) 529-4185

Kansas City, MO:
When: Second Thursday of each month, 7:30 pm.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

Portland, OR:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact:: Grace Lee-Park, (503) 284-5085

San Diego, CA [NEW SALON]
When: Friday November 22, 6 pm
Where: Call for location
Contact: Carroll Blue, (619) 594-6591

St. Louis, MO:
When: Third Thursday of each month, 7 pm.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Tucson, AZ:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC:
When: Second Tuesday of each month, 7 pm
Where: Herb's Restaurant, 1614 Rhode Island Ave., NW
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x4

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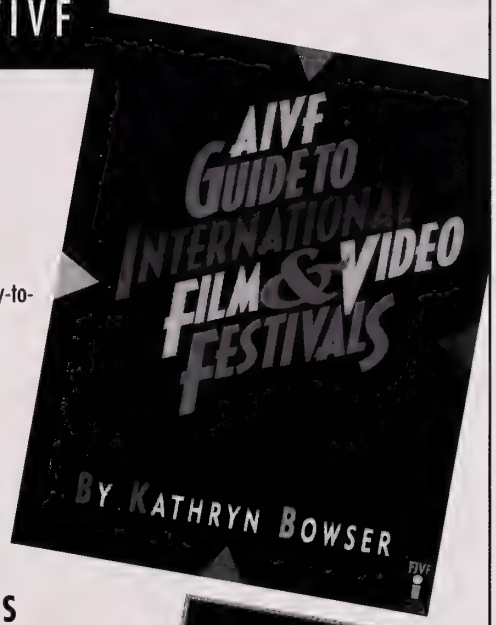
> **"In making *Picture Bride* we turned many times to AIVF/FIVF publications for the facts on fundraising, production and distribution. Their books are up-to-date, well organized and accessible. Best of all, it's getting the 411 without the schmooze.**
> ***Kayo Hatta – "Picture Bride"***

> **"When people ask me how and what festivals to enter, I simply refer them to AIVF/FIVF's Guide. Not only is it the most comprehensive and up to date listing I've seen but the indexes slice and dice the festivals into every conceivable category. It's absolutely indispensable for independent producers.**
> ***Frederick Marx – "Hoop Dreams"***

AIVF GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVALS

By Kathryn Bowser $34.95/$29.95 members
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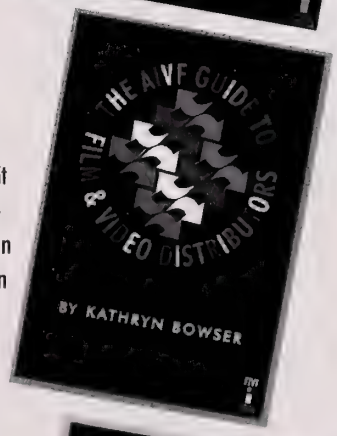
The 4th edition of FIVF's best seller is a completely indexed and easy-to-read compendium of over 400 international film and video festivals, with contact information, entry regulations, deadlines, categories, accepted formats, and much more. The Festival Guide includes information on all types of festivals: small and large, specialized and general, domestic and foreign.



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Edited by Kathryn Bowser $24.95/$19.95 members
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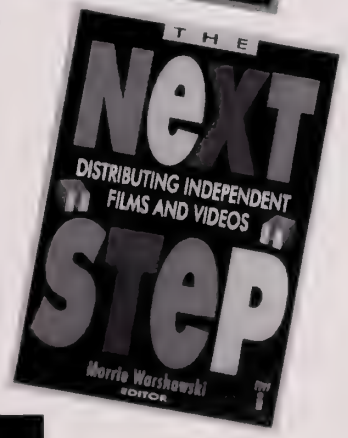
A must-read for film and video makers searching for the right distributor. The Distributors Guide presents handy profiles of nearly 200 commercial and nonprofit distributors, practical information and company statistics on the type of work handled, primary markets, relations with producers, marketing and promotion, foreign distribution and contacts. Fully indexed, this is the best compendium of distribution information especially tailored for independent producers available.



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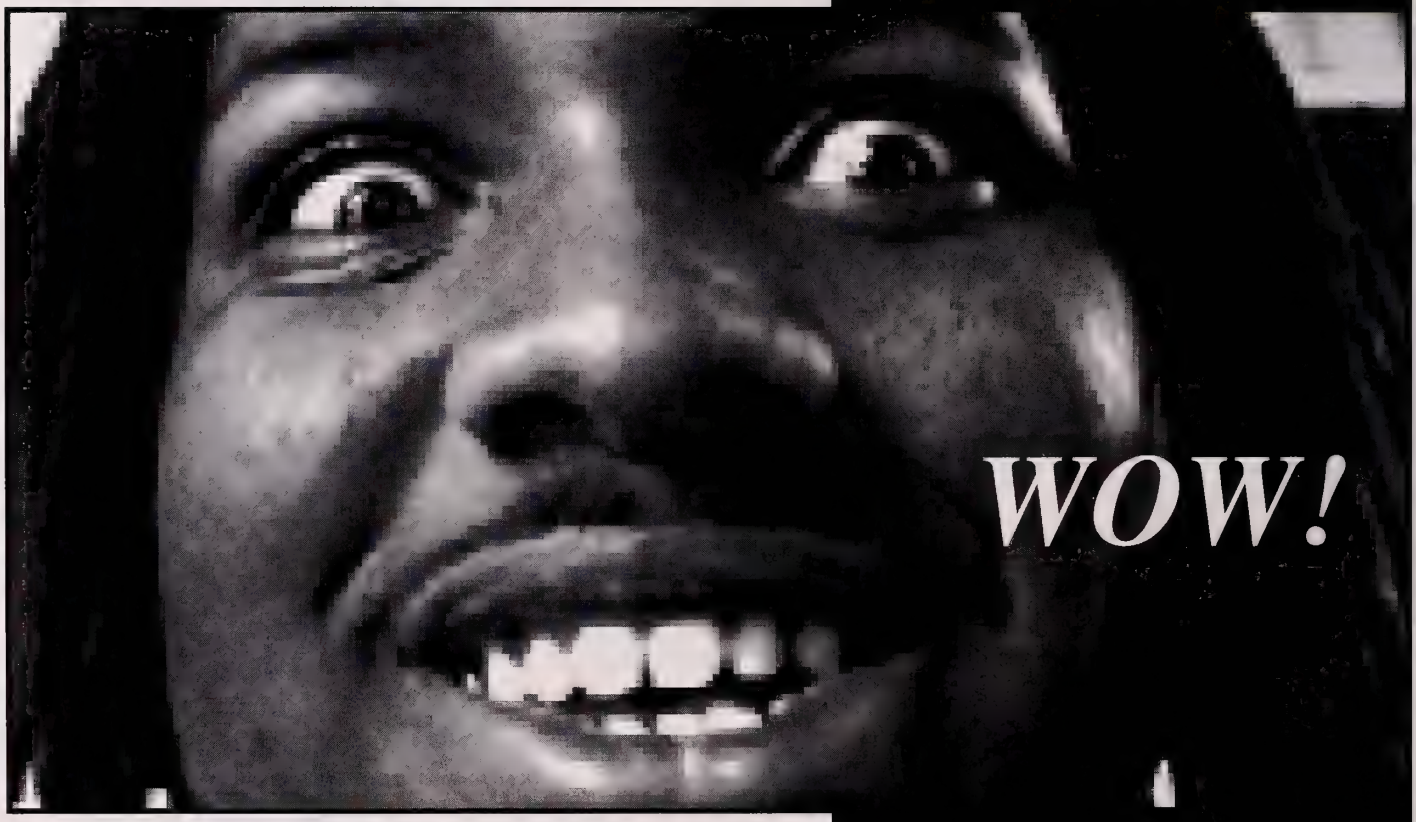
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DECEMBER 1996

the independent FILM&VIDEO monthly

Fetishes

AND OTHER HOT DOCS

SELLING TO THE EDUCATIONAL MARKET

5 FUNDING SOURCES

10 ARTIST COLONIES

27 NEW FILMS



'Fetishes' Mistress Catherine in the S&M parlor Pandora's Box

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the independent FILM & VIDEO monthly

December 1996
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 10

Publisher: Ruby Lerner
Editor in Chief: Patricia Thomson
Managing Editor: Dana Harris
Editorial Assistant: Ryan Deussing
Contributing Editors: Kathryn Bowser, Luke Hones, Barbara Bliss Osborn, Roberto Quezada-Dardon, Robert L. Seigel, Esq.
Art Director: Daniel Christmas
Advertising: Laura D. Davis (212) 807-1400 x225
National Distribution: Total Circulation (Manhattan) (201) 342-6334; Ingram Periodicals (800) 627-6247
Printed in the USA by Lancaster Press
Send address changes to: *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013.

The Independent Film & Video Monthly (ISSN 0731-5198) is published monthly except February and September by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation dedicated to the promotion of video and film. Subscription to the magazine ($45/yr individual; $25/yr student; $75/yr library; $100/yr nonprofit organization; $150/yr business/industry) is included in annual membership dues paid to the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the national trade association of individuals involved in independent film and video, 304 Hudson St., NY, NY 10013, (212) 807-1400; fax: (212) 463-8519; aivffivf@aol.com; http://www.virtualfilm.com/AIVF/

Periodical Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

Publication of *The Independent* is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Publication of any advertisement in *The Independent* does not constitute an endorsement. AIVF/FIVF are not responsible for any claims made in an ad.

Letters to *The Independent* should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length.

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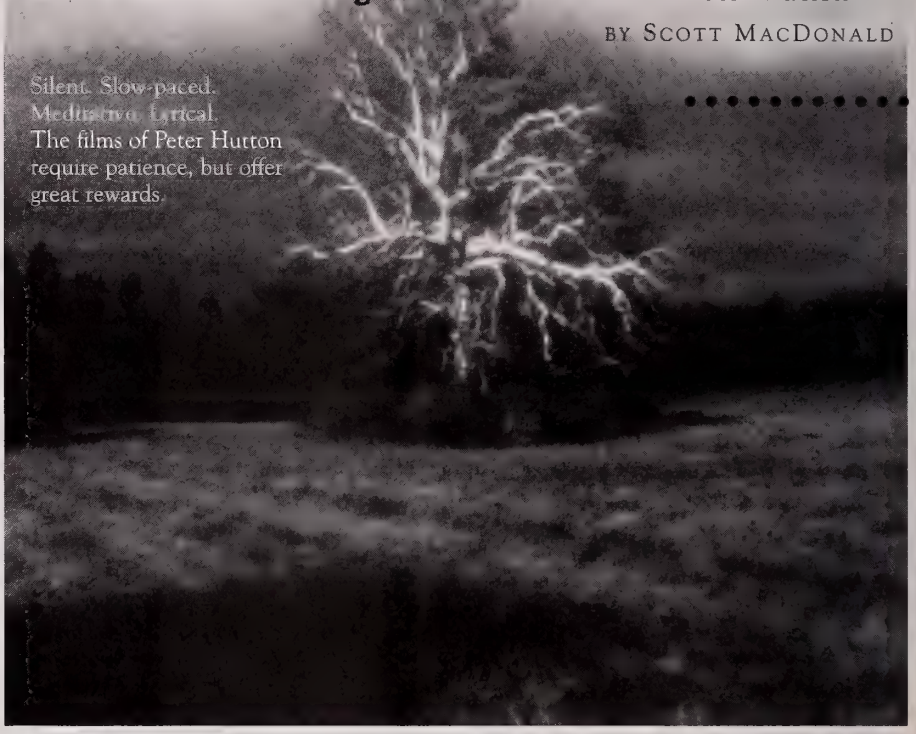
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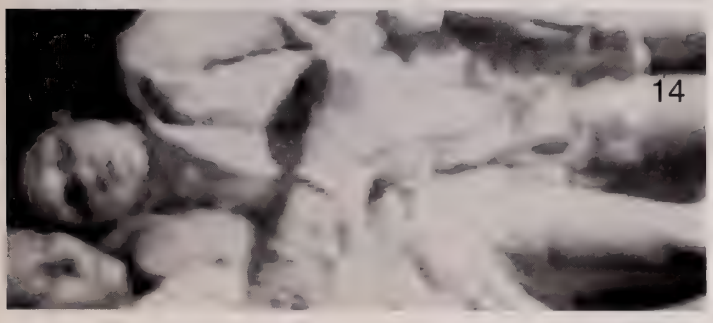
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COVER: One of the Mistresses from Pandora's Box, a Fifth Avenue S&M parlor that Nick Broomfield explores in *Fetishes*, a highlight of the new documentary sidebar at the Toronto film festival. Photo: Susan Meiselas/Magnum, courtesy In Pictures.

media news

Pennies from Heaven

New Funds for Mediamakers

EDITED BY DANA HARRIS

JUST WHEN FILMMAKERS ARE READY TO BELIEVE the phrase *funding source* is an oxymoron, here's five new or revised grants and finishing funds to raise their hopes. Grant-qualifying topics range from Judaism, human rights, and U.S.–Mexico relations to positive images of women.

Also on this list are two new feature film finishing funds. However, unless you wish to annoy the production companies that sponsor these funds, don't ask for an "application."

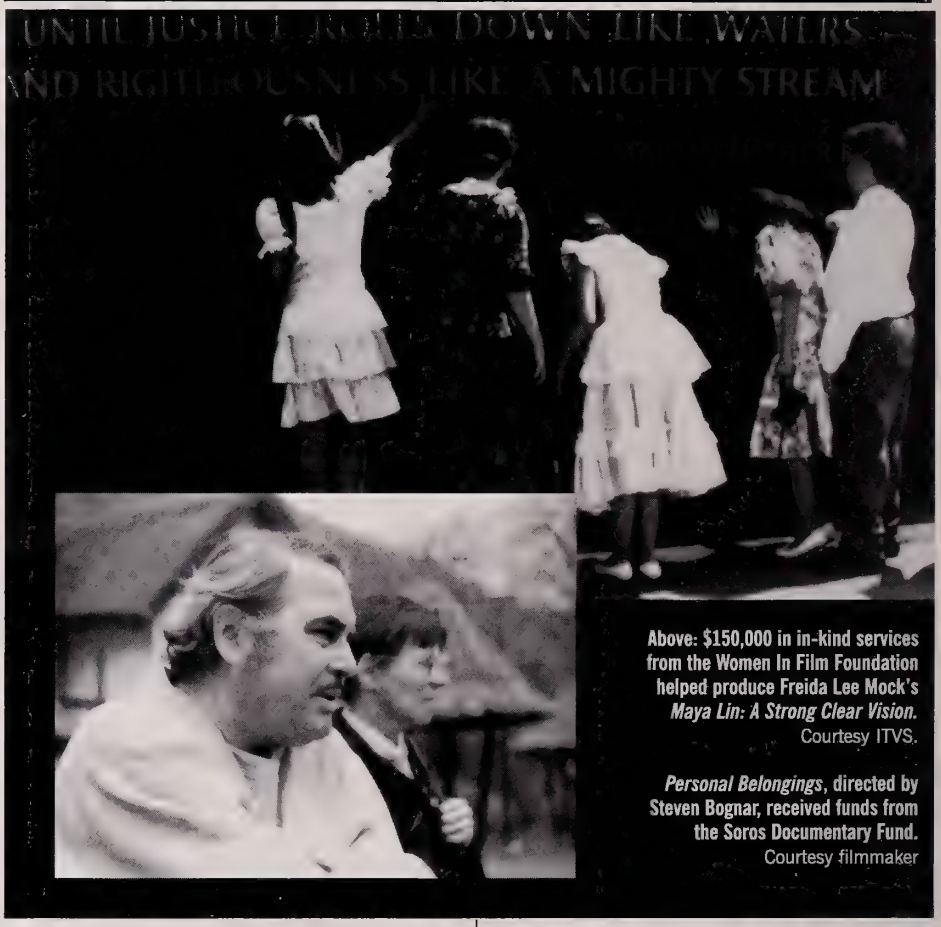
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RECENTLY ESTABLISHED BY THE SOROS Foundation, the Soros Documentary Fund is designed to support documentaries that focus on significant current issues in human rights, freedom of expression, and social justice and civil liberties.

Among the 14 grants awarded to date are $30,000 for Elizabeth Barret's *Stranger with a Camera*, about the murder of filmmaker Hugh O'Connor, $50,000 for Arthur Dong's *Licensed to Kill*, about men convicted of murdering gays, and $4,200 for Steven Bogner's *Personal Belongings*, about the struggles of his Hungarian immigrant father.

Unlike most granting agencies, the Soros fund favors new filmmakers with fewer than two projects under their belt (not including student films). Seed grants are expected to be in the $10,000–15,000 range, while production and postproduction grants may be as high as $50,000. The average grant hovers around $25,000.

The Soros Documentary Fund Board, which works with an annual $1 million budget, meets four times a year to review proposals. Investment banker and Hungarian immigrant George Soros bankrolls the fund. He also distributes an additional $300 million each year to promote democracy and an open society in Eastern Europe and Russia.



Above: $150,000 in in-kind services from the Women In Film Foundation helped produce Freida Lee Mock's *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision.* Courtesy ITVS.

***Personal Belongings*, directed by Steven Bognar, received funds from the Soros Documentary Fund.** Courtesy filmmaker

For further information, contact: Diane Weyermann, Director of the Arts and Culture Regional Program, Open Society Institute, 888 7th Avenue, #3100, New York, NY 10106; (212) 887-0657.

•

IF YOU HAVE A FILM OR VIDEO PROJECT THAT deals with U.S.-Mexico issues, you'll want to investigate the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture. The fund, which was established in 1991, is a joint inititative of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bancomer Cultural Foundation, and FONCA, Mexico's national fund for culture and the arts.

The fund, which also finances projects in the disciplines of music, theater, cultural studies, and publications, accepts application for both institutional and independent projects and gives awards that range from $2,000 to $25,000. The fund also awards reimbursable grants.

Between 1992 and 1995, the fund awarded 24 grants to Mexican and American film and videomakers, including $15,000 for Lynne Corcoran's *Casos de la Frontera*, a documentary on the health and welfare of the people living on the U.S.–Mexican border, and $25,000 for Renee Tajima's *La Reunion*, about the bicultural experience of Mexican-Americans.

The fund's 1997 program will be open January 1 through March 31, 1997. Guideline revisions for 1997 will be available in mid-December. To request guidelines

and/or further information, send a 6-by-9-inch SASE (with postage for 3 oz.) to: U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture, c/o BBF, PO Box 3087, Laredo, TX 78044-3087.; http://www.laneta. apc.org/usmexcult /intro. html.

•

STEVEN SPIELBERG'S RIGHTEOUS PERSONS Foundation provided seed money for the new Fund for Jewish Documentary Filmmaking, which is designed to support the making of documentaries that "promote thoughtful consideration of Jewish history, culture, identity, and contemporary issues." Most awards are expected to fall in the $20,000–30,000 range, with none over $50,000 or 50 percent of the total project budget.

The fund's first four grants, announced in July, were $10,000 completion awards. The recipients were Deborah Kaufman and Alan Snitow for *Blacks and Jews*, about the historical and contemporary relations of the two communities; Robby Henson and Elizabeth Rodgers for *Exodus 1947*, about a ship turned away from British-occupied Palestine; Judith Helfand for *A Healthy Baby Girl*, about a Jewish woman coming to terms with her exposure to DES; and Marcia Jarmel for *Myriam & Rus: Women of Return*, about the appeal of Orthodox Judaism for two non-religious Jewish women.

In addition to subject matter, the fund will evaluate proposals on the basis of project personnel, the likelihood of completion, and the project's suitability for TV broadcast. As we went to press, the next grant awards were to have been announced on November 22. The second round of funding is expected to include larger awards for projects in less advanced stages of production.

The deadline for applications for the fund's third round will probably be April 1997. For further information, contact: The Fund for Jewish Documentary Filmmaking, National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Avenue, 21st fl., New York, NY 10001; (212) 629-0500.

•

AFTER SKIPPING A YEAR OF GRANT-GIVING DUE to organizational downsizing, the Women in Film Foundation revived its Finishing Fund Grants that help support video- and filmmakers—male or female—who "demonstrate advanced and innovative skills consistent with the goals of Women in Film."

The grant program, which was founded in 1985, gives awards that range from checks for $2,500 to as much as the $150,000 in-kind services Freida Lee Mock received for *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*, the feature that won the 1995 Oscar for feature documentary.

While the majority of Women in Film–funded films have been documentaries, any kind of film project qualifies that relates to women and issues of increasing their employment and promoting equal opportunities; encouraging their individual creative projects; enhancing their media image; furthering their professional development; and generally influencing prevailing attitudes and practices regarding women. The fund is open to dramatic, educational, animated, and experimental work.

The fund receives between 150 and 300 applications per year. Specific production awards include the Loreen Arbus Focus on Disability Grant (up to $5,000), the Max Goldenson and Karen Hansen Women and Children in War grant (up to $3,000); and the Cinema Research Corp. Grant of opticals and/or titles. Academy Award–winning sound editor Stephen Flick and his wife Judy also provide a production grant through their company, Creative Cafe—they provided Mock's $150,000 funding, and this year gave $35,000 in services to Eileen O'Meara's short animation project.

The overall number of grants depends on the number of worthy applications the foundation receives and how much money they have to give. However, television and screenwriter Loraine Despres, chair of the Women in Film Foundation, says, "If we see something we like but can't afford to support, we call up other organizations and get them to give the film a grant."

Awards are made on the basis of need, content, originality, and production team credentials. And, adds Despres, "We're always looking for good, high-quality fiction."

The Women in Film Foundation announces its 1996 winners in December, and the next deadline is October 1, 1997. For further information, contact executive director Cynthia Leverhant, Women in Film, 6464 Sunset Boulevard, Suite #530, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (213) 463-6040.

•

KARDANA FILMS HAS CREATED TWO JOINT VENtures in recent months. First was Good Fear, a genre film fund formed with Good Machine, and most recently Ark Pictures, a feature film production company created with the Gotham Entertainment Group. Ark Pictures plans to develop and produce five to seven director-dri-

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MEDIA NEWS

ven $1–$2 million pictures per year. The managing partners are Gotham's Joel Roodman and Patrick McDarrah; Kardana's Tom Carouso and Barry Schindel; and investor Patricia Kluge.

"We're going for the niche market. We're not trying to make the wide, commercial pictures—we want films that are intelligent, inspire interaction, and push buttons," says Roodman, adding the magic words, "We allow a filmmaker complete creative control."

Gotham, which was founded by ex-Miramaxers Roodman and McDarrah, brings its marketing and distribution talents to the fund, while Kardana Films (which co-produced Todd Haynes's *Safe* and executive produced Peter Cohn's *Drunks)* focuses on the production end. Says Carouso, "It's better to invest in five films than one at a time."

Ark opened its doors with $10 million in investment capital from investor and Virginia Festival of American Film founder Kluge who, according to *Variety*, "had been thinking about investing in an insurance company when my banker brought me this deal." Roodman calls her someone with "a wide range of contacts at different levels and truly a person who believes in the artistic vision."

Ark's first film will be Philip and Belinda Haas' screen adaptation of John Hawkes' novel *The Blood Oranges*. The husband-and-wife team also adapted *Angels and Insects* for the screen.

For more information about Ark Pictures, contact http://www.gothamcity.com.

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PRODUCTION/DISTRIBUTION COMPANY STRAND Releasing and Victor Syrmis's New Oz Productions have formed a production partnership, Strand/New Oz Productions, to develop films and offer completion funding. According to Strand Releasing's Jon Gerrans, who founded Strand with Marcus Hu in 1988, "Syrmis has been getting involved in the entertainment business over the last four or five years, investing in companies like ours. We have been working with Victor for the past three years for completion and [prints and advertising] funding on a per-picture basis."

However, the new agreement does more than formalize their previous arrangement: Strand/NewOz is a separate company from both Strand Releasing and New Oz Productions. "The hope is most of the projects we develop will go to Strand for distribution, but it's not exclusive," says Gerrans. "Sometimes the advertising budget would

require we find a Fox Searchlight or Miramax. In that case, Strand/New Oz will just act as the producers. The goal is to ultimately be a full-service company with the production servicing the distribution arm."

Gerrans says that the goal of Strand/New Oz is to create films that are "commercial as well as critical successes. There's no particular limits other than an interesting director or script. They'll be similar to the films Strand Releasing has done in the past, but on a grander scale."

The fund has what Gerrans calls "a seven-figure budget commitment" for the first year. "We'll go from there when we see how it's working," he says. "The hope is by then we'll create some alliances with other like-minded companies and create more projects on an international basis."

Strand/New Oz currently has two projects in development. Nancy Savoca will direct *The Two-Bit Tango*, a $6-$8 million film based on a series of female detective novels written by Elizabeth Pincus. James Bosley, who wrote *Fun*, is adapting the script. And Peter Sagal is adapting his play *What to Say* to direct, with a budget of $3–6 million. Only the Strand/New Oz film currently in production, Brian Sloan's *I Think I Do* (budgeted at $500,000), will be handled by Strand Releasing.

BARBARA BLISS OSBORN AND DANA HARRIS

Barbara Bliss Osborn is a journalist and educator in Los Angeles. Dana Harris is the managing editor of The Independent.

Will Power: Estate Planning via VLA

The gloomy idea of estate planning could make an independent filmmaker grateful for poverty: as long as you're low on worldly possessions, the need for a will seems less than pressing. However, estate planing has another purpose besides disbursing your paltry savings account. Namely, a will can ensure that your films and videos stick around after you're gone.

"We've seen too many young artists who have died and lost their work because they didn't have proper estate planning," says Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts attorney Scott Hoot. "The work goes into attics and closets, never to be seen again."

That's why Hoot developed the Artists Legacy Project, which offers free and specialized estate planning for artists. While the project grew out of concerns for artist communities that were being hit hard by HIV/AIDS, the VLA offers its services to any artist.

The Artist Legacy Project is based in New York City, but the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts can help artists from all over the country find estate-planning assistance. "We will help any artist, and that term is broadly defined," says Hoot, adding, "We don't discourage anyone from calling, but I wouldn't do a will for someone I couldn't sit down and talk with. There are thirty-five arts-related legal service organizations with whom we cooperate in the U.S., and we would do our best to find somebody who could help."

For more information, call the VLA's Art Law Line at (212) 319-2910.

—D.H.

Errata

In the profile of Paul Gachot and Stefan Gerard in the August/September "Talking Heads," the address for the GenArt Film Festival was incorrect. The address is: GenArt Film Festival, 145 W. 28th St., Suite 11C, New York, NY 10001.

An article in the October issue about television by and for kids misstated Cara Mertes' title. She is the director of *Signal to Noise*.



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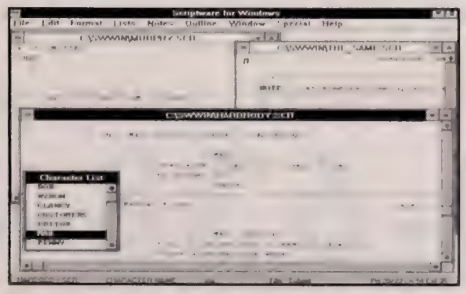
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RUTH HAYES

animator

BY TOM KEOUGH



IN THE ANIMATED COSMOS OF RUTH HAYES, everything is in motion. Not just the sinuous dance of an egg yolk as it slowly drops from its casing. Not just the tapping foot of a tense cop as he listens to a woman pontificate from a soapbox. She also sees movment in the more abstract elements of a life—history, democracy, and artistic consciousness itself.


Courtesy filmmaker

Everything moves toward inexorable endings and beginnings in Hayes' work, and in a handful of short animations she has captured both the wonder and grief in a world of ceaseless change. At the same time, Hayes has established herself as one of the best known and most respected visual artists in the Seattle area. She regularly hosts popular "animators' socials" at Seattle's one-stop multimedia education and production center, 911 Media Arts. She conducts teaching residencies in animation at city schools, encourages personal expression at one of the area's toughest juvenile detention facilities, and co-facilitates an annual summer school for high school visual artists at her alma mater, the California Institute of Arts.

But it is the way that Hayes translates transcendent ideas into lyrical, active cinema that gains her fans. In her brief but highly entertaining civics lesson on the messy glories of democracy, *What Are Your First Amendment Rights?* (produced for the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression), Hayes' kid-friendly drawings of a town square in which all manner of Constitutionally protected activity is at full steam stirs a viewer's love of freedom. But the film's charge comes from the way Hayes' camera pans, in a Whitmanesque embrace, over the whole of the square's roiling, combative energy, grandly underscoring the majesty of a society that encourages differences.

"I spent my formative years, the late sixties, in the Bay Area," says the Connecticut-born Hayes, "involved in church groups, aware of issues and demonstrations. I also did a lot of reading and research in history and psychology and literature."

Hayes credits her foundation in integrated political, intellectual, and artistic thought to the early influence of her parents, Eisenhower Republicans "with a strong sense of right and wrong." Her activist sister also made a considerable impression, Hayes says, especially when the two traveled extensively together in the early seventies and Hayes tended to see much of the struggling, post-colonized world from her sibling's point-of-view.

Hayes' developing perspective found its most ambitious voice in her recent *Reign of the Dog*. A 16-minute dreamscape about historic oppression of native peoples in the Americas, Hayes trains her intuitive lens on the transcending legacies of random motion in time. "Random Motion," incidentally, is the name of Hayes' production company.

"A lot of stuff that inspires me is abundance of activity," Hayes says. "I look into a tide pool or at a cityscape, and I appreciate the ordered chaos. I do get frustrated if I only have an isolated image to look at in one of my films."

Hayes first explored "ordered chaos" at Harvard in 1973, where she found her love of drawing magnified at that university's Department of Visual and Environmental Studies. In order to attain her required credits in studio arts, Hayes studied animation and eventually did her thesis in the painstaking discipline. While in school, she completed *Eggs*, a dazzling short work in which Hayes shot, in slow-motion 16mm, real egg whites and yolks dropped from broken shells. She then rotoscoped the results and drew in a series of wondrous metamorphoses in which bands of gooey egg become, for example, a tiny Garden of Eden suggestive of new worlds.

Her next film, *Body Sketches*, was a kind of visual resolution of scholarly conflicts between the formal requirements of figure drawing and the boundless possibilities of animation. She says it reflects her desire to work without storyboards,

to keep creating until a film emerges. "It's not efficient, but it's more pleasurable," Hayes says.

Hayes moved to Seattle in 1979, where she helped keep body and soul together through a series of popular flipbooks sold at bookstores and art centers. After seeing them, *Fantasia* animator Jules Engel nudged Hayes toward graduate school. She graduated from Cal Arts in '92, after three stimulating years of watching lots of film and catching up with the impact of computer technology on animation.

That advanced degree has allowed Hayes to support herself through teaching, while grants jump-start her projects. Currently in the works is *On the Way to Winchester*, a piece inspired by Ralph Waldo Emerson's poetic descriptions of the American landscape. The busy Hayes is investing more time and money on software applications for this one, such as Adobe After Effects, in part to expand her education.

"Using a Mac is not as much fun as drawing," Hayes says, "but it is faster for some things. And, as it is, there's not enough time to do my own stuff."

TOM KEOUGH

Tom Keough writes about film for Seattle Weekly *and* Eastsideweek, *both in Seattle. He also contributes to Film.com and Freezone.com.*

TALKING HEADS

SHARI SPRINGER BERMAN & ROBERT PULCINI

directors

OFF THE MENU: THE LAST DAYS OF CHASEN'S

BY JULIA HAMMER

THE HUSBAND-AND-WIFE FILMMAKING TEAM OF Robert Pulcini and Shari Springer Berman knows how to listen when opportunity knocks. They began collaborating shortly after meeting at Columbia University's Graduate Film School. After two years of producing and editing each other's projects, they became a couple and sometime thereafter married. Strapped for cash, they penned a "Grisham-type thriller," found an agent, and were on their way to Hollywood.

Before the whirlwind week was up, they got their big break. It wasn't Paramount or Disney anteing up for their big-budget thriller, but rather the seed of an idea for a nonfiction feature. While staying at a bed and breakfast run by Raymond Bilbool, a poised but persnickety banquet captain at the Beverly Hills restaurant Chasen's, they were absorbed by his tales of behind-the-scenes drama at the legendary eatery—and informed of its imminent closing. Without even stopping there, Springer Berman and Pulcini flew back to New York to hurriedly piece together the project's elements: the crew, the funding, and the story structure.

"What convinced us to do the film," says Pulcini "were these incredible characters—Pepe, the Mexican bartender; Julius, the Czech maitre d'—and all of them had worked at Chasen's for thirty, forty, or fifty years." Springer Berman adds, "We wanted to make a film from the point of view of the workers—the last gasp of Hollywood's Golden Age from the perspective of the people who had served the stars."

Julia Strohm, who had worked as Lindsay Law's assistant at *American Playhouse*, signed on as producer. Two months later, with start-up funds and crew in place, the co-directors flew back to California to film Chasen's final two weeks: the last suppers, a wedding, and an Oscar-night party.

Poignant, humorous, and ironic, *Off the Menu* documents in verité style the feeding frenzy of Tinseltown's elite vying for a final peek at the landmark that for generations was the watering hole of presidents and celebrities—from Ronald Reagan to Shirley Temple, Elizabeth Taylor to Humphrey Bogart, Alfred Hitchcock to Grace Kelly.

Off the Menu serves up plenty of stars who reminisce eloquently, as well as archival footage that achingly romanticizes Chasen's halcyon years. But the heart of the documentary lies in its juxtaposition of the last-minute circus of celebrities with behind-the-scene glimpses of the devoted and dignified staff who, in the face of impending unemployment, continue to perform their cherished



At left, **Robert Pulcini and Shari Springer Berman;** ***below,*** **from *OFF THE MENU: The Last Day's of Chasen's***
Courtesy filmmakers

roles to perfection.

In shooting a verité documentary under a restricted time frame, the sharing of directorial duties proved advantageous. "Sometimes we split up with different crews: a video crew, the 16mm, and a non-sync camera," says Springer Berman. The difficulty lay in gaining the trust of the staff, who were fiercely protective of their patrons' comfort. "Raymond was really into the idea, and since [the staff] either loved or feared him, he was able to negotiate for us," says Pulcini. An intimacy eventually developed between the filmmakers and Chasen's old-timers after many late nights around the piano.

Lighting was also a problem. "It's the darkest place," explains Springer Berman. "There's no light—not a single window." Built for New York expatriates like Bogart and Spencer Tracy who came from the theater milieu, Chasen's purposely shut out the sun. "Our cinematographer [Ken Kobland] was not happy. The waiters could tell if the light level was raised slightly, and they kept unscrewing the bulbs we put in."

When it came to the last hurrah—Miramax's Oscar-night party—the filmmakers had to sneak in and shoot with three-chip Hi-8 cameras. The greenish hue and the image of Quentin Tarantino gesturing wildly over a table to John Travolta works well as an ironic counterpoint to the lush black-and-white footage of yesteryear's cooly glamorous.

After the two-week shoot, the filmmakers returned to New York to cut a trailer and raise additional funds. It was at one such screening that Alicia Sams, who produces for Diandra Douglas (Michael Douglas's wife), became excited with the project. She passed the trailer along to Ms. Douglas, then both came on board as executive producers. The filmmakers were then able to shoot some additional footage and interviews and begin the editing process.

Pulcini, who won a New Line Cinema Award for his short, *Love After Death*, had never edited a feature-length film. "I enjoyed the volume of material and fell in love with the editing process." He spent one month cutting on a Steenbeck. "I really think for a documentary it takes time to know your characters and what your movie is about." Surely Chasen's devoted staff and patrons would agree.

In some ways, the history of Chasen's contains that of Hollywood itself. When the venerable 59-year-old eatery rolled up its red carpet for the last time on April 1, 1995—to make room for a strip mall—one last legend of Hollywood's Golden Era made its final bow.

Springer Berman and Pulcini have made a

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Julia Hammer is a freelance writer for Moving Pictures International *and formerly director of the International Monitor Awards.*

THECLA SCHIPHORST

multimedia artist

BODYMAPS

BY MARGARET GALLAGHER



***Above,* from *Bodymaps: sensuality and anarchy*, Thecla Schiphorst Cour**

YOU'RE STANDING IN A DARK, QUIET ROOM NEXT to a table covered with a soft, white velvet cloth. As you move your hand across the cloth, the image of a woman comes to life on the table, shivering just beneath the surface of a layer of water. You're surrounded by the sounds of voices and water, which, like the images, respond to your touch. A long, firm stroke of your hand and the image on the table may dissolve into that of a young boy; a gentle trailing of your finger brings on an interplay between the sound of water and bodies moving through it. As you move away, the body reverts to stillness. But the rules are complex and subtle, impossible to decode. The effect is at once sensual and disturbing.

You've just experienced *Bodymaps: artifacts of touch (the sensuality and anarchy of touch)*, an interactive installation by Vancouver-based artist Thecla Schiphorst. A computer-integrated media artist, performer, choreographer, and designer, it is Thecla's image you see shivering and transforming in *Bodymaps*, and that of her 11-year-old son, Nathan.

"Historically, my work has been focused on notions of the body, the relationship between statistical and non-statistical representations of the body, questions of how technology mediates the representation of the body, and the representation and experience of space and time," says Schiphorst, an animated woman whose tiny frame seems barely able to contain her energy. "I'm very interested in the relationship between our physical experience and the knowledge and potential of our body. In our culture, often the way we deal with our body experience is primarily to ignore it. Things we think of as being extraordinary capabilities and physical techniques are really things that are given to us to experience [and] that we breed out of ourselves."

Like much of her work, *Bodymaps* combines Schiphorst's diverse background in computer science and contemporary dance to raise questions about the body, relationships, and technology. Other works have included *16 Pools*, a performance piece in which dancers interact with motion sensors to trigger aquatic sounds, and a CD-ROM archive of choreographer Merce Cunningham's work.

Bodymaps integrates the sense of touch as a mode of audience interaction, and Schiphorst says that experience is key to the work. "Even though things may be called 'interactive,' it's still linear and analytically defined. I was really interested in exploring something that would subvert that kind of relationship and place you in a state where you would be called to reflect on your own experience," she explains. "The experience itself is in essence the whole point of the piece.

"In many interfaces there actually are a lot of rules which are important for the user to understand so that they can 'win' or gain enough expertise to get the end result. It's very much a consumer transaction. Instead, I wanted to make a transaction based on the concept of 'gift,' something that deals with passing something on, whether information, knowledge, or experience, in a more circular way."

Schiphorst's work reflects her role as a unique entity in the world of computer-integrated arts. She uses her computer skills to design hardware and interfaces, but her experience as a dancer informs her content. A ris-



ts of touch (the h); at left, nmaker

ing star in the computer science industry while still a teenager, she worked as a highly successful programmer and systems analyst and faced burnout at age 22.

"The more successful I became, the more unhappy I was. Then I had a real personal crisis, sort of a nervous breakdown, and quit all my jobs and went to the mountains," says Schiphorst. "It was a great thing to happen because it enabled me to shed so much of that cultural identity I had chosen because I was trying to please other people. I was lucky I figured it out when I was really young. After that I decided I was going to study dance at university, because that's what I had always wanted to do."

Today, she works as a dancer/performer, a computing science educator, and a media artist. Her work has met with international acclaim, with *Bodymaps* being shown at the Electronic Arts Festival in Vancouver, Canada; the Electric Dance Festival in Newcastle, UK; and at Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria. Future directions are focused on interface, motion capture, and body tracking, all with a feminist perspective.

"I'm really interested in rethinking both hardware and software, as well as interface design. I think it's critical that we incorporate a kind of physical experiential knowledge into our world, our culture, and our technology," says Schiphorst. "If we don't, the kind of knowledge that's embedded in our technology as it now stands is really militaristic and filled with terrorist metaphors. And we're building communications systems based on these metaphors. It's critical from a perspective of how we eventually communicate with one another that we find other ways of doing that."

MARGARET GALLAGHER

Margaret Gallagher is a Vancouver-based writer, performer, and video artist. She has worked in the new media field since 1993.

TALKING HEADS

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These are just a few of the major American independent films that have caught your eyes and your hearts at the International Forum in the last two years. Stay seated. Much more to come in '97.

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field reports

Growing Pains

The Independent Feature Film Market encounters fans, detractors, and 200 more projects than it can hold.

BY DANA HARRIS



Jeremiah Bosgang takes a whack at Dick Cavett in Bosgang's *Good Money,* one of the films that received Market buzz. Courtesy filmmaker

IN 1996, THE INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM Market (IFFM) became a meta-market. With submissions at an all-time high, perceptions surrounding the IFFM seemed to take on almost as much importance as what actually happened inside the Angelika Theater in downtown Manhattan.

The number of projects submitted to IFFM, a program of the Independent Feature Project (IFP), has consistently crept upward from the 17 offered at the first market in 1979 (when it was a sidebar to the New York Film Festival) to this year's high of nearly 600—about 200 more than the IFFM can hold. And while most of the usual suspects made their appearances, industry stalwart/producer's rep/author John Pierson was a very public no-show. He posted his rationale with others' IFFM perspectives in the IFFM's "Unofficial Webcast" on the Sundance Channel's website.

As for the actual market, it was its usual mobbed self. Some filmmakers were so frantic they pushed their flyers into the same hands twice, but there weren't many wacky (and expensive) trinkets or stunts. Filmmakers seemed happy to take the advice that consultant/Sundance insider Bob Hawk posted in his own contribution to Sundance website and considered key to finding happiness at the IFFM : "Expect nothing."

•

"To say that market fees—when [filmmakers] have spent maybe hundreds of thousands on a film—are impoverishing, to me is ridiculous."

— Catherine Tait, "Tait Necessarily So: IFP Executive Director Catherine Tait on What's Right about the IFFM," by Adam Pincus (Sundance website)

"If the woman who is the head of the IFP can say 'What's $500 to a filmmaker who has already spent thousands,' my case is closed."

— John Pierson, asked to comment on the IFFM

BRINGING A FILM TO THE MARKET CAN COST anywhere between $300 (shorts) and $425 (features), $100 IFP membership fee not included. While some filmmakers bristle at the cost, others feel it just comes with the territory.

"We got our money's worth, definitely," says Daniel Stoecker, co-producer of *Isle of Lesbos*. "I'm still working off of that momentum." Stoecker says his *Rocky Horror*-meets *Oklahoma!* musical has a number of distributors interested, as well as production companies who want to discuss future projects. And much of the credit, he says, goes to the IFFM.

"I think everything resulted from our screening at the market," says Stoecker, who adds that they were prepared to fill their screening despite its 9:45 a.m. slot. "The Berlin rep was in the audience, and now we have a champion at Berlin."

Writer/director Dean Bivens (*Electric Urn*) received a number of festival invites at the IFFM, but says it wasn't worth the fee. "I think it's a big money-making thing for the IFP," he says. "We made our connections with distributors before [the market]."

"I always think it's better to go than not go," says IFFM veteran Doug Block, who was the coproducer of *Silverlake Life* and *Jupiter's Wife*, and brought his new documentary, *Home Page,* to the market as a work-in-progress (and a No Borders participant—see sidebar, *above*.)

"I don't know too many documentary people who blow off the IFFM," says Block. "It serves different purposes. For *Silverlake Life*, we were just trying to create the initial buzz. The thing for me this time was to get the sense of the marketability of this film."

Bivens preferred the non-market screening he held two days later at the Gramercy Theater. "That was a really organic situation; it wasn't some kind of meat market," he says. "I probably wouldn't go back to the IFFM unless the structure was changed. I'd just send tapes to festivals and distributors."

However, Dwight Greene, director of *Ramming Speed*, compares the industry directory he received at the IFFM to "a racetrack tip sheet" and says the experience was espe-

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No Borders

THIS WAS THE SECOND YEAR FOR THE IFFM's NO BORDERS, THE MARKET WITHIN THE MARKET WHERE 49 hand-picked projects (including 18 in a new documentary section) take meetings with a selection of 60 participating companies in search of buyers and financing. "I felt like a kid in a candy store," says Ruth Leitman, director/producer of the documentary *Alma*.

For a script or work-in-progress to be considered for No Borders, IFFM deputy director Michelle Byrd says "the filmmakers must have 20 percent of the financing in place, should have a project that's accessible or of interest to the international marketplace, and the filmmaker should have a track record, and that definition is open to interpretation." Adds Byrd, "There aren't that many projects that are even eligible."

Some No Borders films or scripts came via recommendations from the IFP's partners in the project—the Rotterdam CineMart (among others, Jesse Peretz's *First Love, Last Rites*); the German film fund Filmstiftung Nordrhein Westfalen; and the Sundance Institute (including *Ball and Chain*, co-written by *Philadelphia* screenwriter Ron Nyswaner).

As last year, No Borders revolved around buyers asking the IFP to arrange meetings with the filmmakers of their choice. But Byrd says the still-young No Borders is already starting to show signs of maturity. "There were more experienced filmmakers this year," she says, citing Wally White (who attended with his *Lie Down with Dogs* follow-up, *Waldo Walker*) and Kalamazoo director Claudia Silver, whose new script, *Lisa and Lisa*, was a No Borders hot property.

"We've also been researching and doing outreach to companies," says Byrd. "We didn't have that in place last year." This resulted in some new faces, including Eckhart Stein from Germany's public broadcasting network, ZDF. Other production companies included Fine Line, Kardana, and Spain's ESICMA.

Bruce Weiss, producer of the No Borders work-in-progress *Side Streets*, says he knew many of the Borders players. However, he adds, "What's nice about it is you wind up meeting somebody you don't know." Even nicer is that Weiss says a meeting with one of those somebodies could lead to Side Streets being in production by spring.

Weiss, who produced three of Hal Hartley's films and says "I spend most of my days looking for money," is already a Borders veteran. Last year, he pitched 900, a film to be directed by Vincent Van Gogh's great-nephew, Theo. He says this also looks to be a spring production. "It's hard to tell if 900 was directly financed through No Borders," says Weiss. "It's more of an unofficial Dutch-American coproduction."

Block, whose *Home Page* is currently in negotiations with the Cinemax documentary series *Reel Life*, says that there were "vague expressions" of the deal before the IFFM, but that No Borders definitely helped accelerate things. However, Block says he's still trying to recover from a sort of postpartum blues. "After No Borders and the IFFM, it's so depressing. The buyers are suddenly inaccessible—they're at meetings, they're on the road," says Block. "It's really tough and all I want is to get back to the film."

—D.H.

cially valuable coming from the industry-free city of Fort Worth, Texas. "We're out in the middle of Texas. Who do we know?" asks Greene, adding, "It's 95 percent follow-up and only five percent market."

•

"Right now, independent film is like the art world in the early '80s. We are...serving that need and responding to this phenomenon."

— Tait, "Tait Necessarily..."

"The issue for me isn't really the films that ultimately succeed. It's the rest, all the films whose resume highlight ends up being a market screening."

-- Pierson, "Why You Won't See Me at the 1996 IFFM" (Sundance website)

BOB HAWK, SOLE PROPRIETOR OF ICI (Independent Consulting for Independents) says he is "kind of an anomaly. I do not do deals or raise money. I am truly an artistic consultant." More specifically, he helped discover Ed Burns and Kevin Smith, and, like Pierson, he's made a name for himself as an industry sage. Unlike Pierson, Hawk loves the IFFM.

"The market is a cornucopia of education. It can raise false hopes, but that's not the fault of anybody," says Hawk. "The public will let you know if they don't like what you've got. I'm sure people have gone to the market and realized that they should be doing something else. This is priceless information."

While Hawk says the pragmatic-but-upbeat essay he posted on the Sundance website was quite different than Pierson's, he thinks the viewpoints complement each other. "He raised many valid points, but I choose to go to the market with the attitude I have," says Hawk. "Anyone who expects finding an embarrassment of riches is going to be disappointed. I always see some things I can be excited over and the rest is reality."

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"The best news for this year's market is the remarkable improvement in quality we're seeing."

— Catherine Tait, IFFM press release, July 17, 1996

"After a week of screenings...none of the IFFM entries had been snapped up by a dis-tributor."

—"Outlook iffy for indie pix," Monica Roman, Variety, September 23, 1996

MARKET DIRECTOR VALERIE SHEPPARD JOINED the IFP staff last March after spending two years in L.A. ("I hated the movie business out there") working for producer Mark Gordon (*Speed*, *Broken Arrow*). This was her first IFFM, as both attendee and director, and her first experience with market fallout.

"It was just sort of strange to have had such a positive, enthusiastic response all the way around, and then on Monday to come in and read what Monica had written," says Sheppard. "I felt bad for the filmmakers because I don't think that was the experience people were having. Buyers said that the quality of the films wasn't as amateur as they'd seen in the past."

Suzanne Fedak, vice president of distribution for In Pictures, agrees. "The technical quality was much higher, with attention paid to design and cinematography. Also, the documentary product, and in particular the works in progress, was extremely promising," she says.

"I thought [the quality] wasn't too terribly different from years' past," says Jason Blum, Miramax's vice president of acquisitions and coproduction. "There's lots of first-time filmmakers, so there are things that are good and there are a few things that are less good."

As for Hawk, who scopes out films for Sundance and other festivals, his tally for completed projects "worthy of consideration in any way" came down to eight features, four documentaries ("at most"), and three shorts. Like other industry members, he declined to be any more specific about which films he liked.

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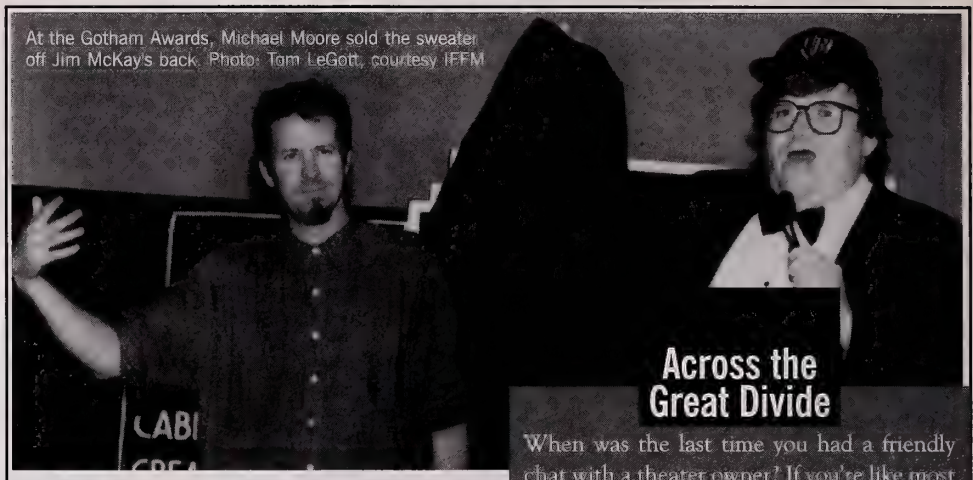
"It's a grassroots event, it casts a wide net. Anyone can participate; it's inclusive rather than exclusive."

— Catherine Tait, "Tait Necessarily..."

"This is a record year in terms of total submissions—close to 600, representing a 20 percent increase over 1995. We can handle only 400 projects at the Market."

— Tait, IFP press release, July 17, 1996

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At the Gotham Awards, Michael Moore sold the sweater off Jim McKay's back. Photo: Tom LeGott, courtesy IFFM

FIELD REPORTS

FOR THE SAKE OF AN OPEN PLAYING FIELD, THE IFFM's rules for application leave room for almost any project outside of porn and splatter. However, popular demand is forcing the market to become increasingly selective.

During its week at the Angelika, the IFFM managed 105 features, 59 works-in-progress, 70 docs (including shorts and works-in-progress), 73 shorts, and 102 scripts, which means some 200 applicants spent $25 (in processing fees) to receive a rejection letter.

Sheppard says that while "we schedule as we go," there is a hierarchy for acceptance: the closer the project is to completion—works-in-progress included—the better its chances.

"I got a few things this year that were shot on Hi-8 video as a work in progress which, in theory, is appropriate because they're looking for money," says Sheppard. "But we get a lot more works-in-progress that are much closer to being finished. Technical quality is going to be a bigger consideration next year."

Sheppard says the market is trying to find ways literally to expand its options, which is why this years' panels were held at Cooper Union. However, Sheppard says the market hopes to remain at the Angelika Theater for the forseeable future, because no one can find another site in New York City that could contain the IFFM. "We get a lot of complaints from people that we already show too much," says Sheppard. "A lot of people complain about having early-morning screenings and there's no way around it."


Cooper Union's Great Hall

Miramax's Blum thinks the increase in submissions bodes well. "That will actually increase the profile of the IFFM, although I think they've been very good at expanding and being flexible. I wouldn't put it past them to find some way to add a few screens."

Across the Great Divide

When was the last time you had a friendly chat with a theater owner? If you're like most filmmakers, it wasn't anytime recently. But for one morning at the IFFM, the yawning chasm between the worlds of exhibitors and producers was bridged. "What's Happening in Film Exhibition?" featured Karen Cooper of Film Forum; Bert Manzari, senior v.p. at Landmark Theatres; and arthouse booker Jeffrey Jacobs, among others, plus the following factoids about the state of exhibition:

Number of screens in the U.S.:
1976 16,000
1995 27,000
today 30,000

Number of new screens below Manhattan's 23 St. in the past 5 years:
35-40

Cost of building a new multiplex theater:
$2 million

Largest film circuit in the U.S.:
Carmike, with 2,478 screens

Smallest film circuit in the U.S.:
Landmark Theatres, with 148 screens

Highest grossing arthouse in the country:
Angelika Film Center, NYC

Number of times more expensive to market a film today than 10 years ago:
50

Cost of a full page ad in the *New York Times*
$60,000

The difference a decade makes:
1984: *Stranger than Paradise*
ticket price: $5
advertising expenditure: $15,000
box office gross opening week: $24,695
1996: *Denise Calls Up*
ticket price: $8
advertising expenditure: $30,000
box office gross opening week: $9,322

Box office revenues required before Film Forum will extend a film's run beyond two weeks:
$20,000 per week

Recent films to qualify:
Flirt, Heavy, The War Room

— PATRICIA THOMSON

THE REAL DEAL

Documentaries Get a New Sidebar at Toronto

field reports

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

ALTHOUGH THE TORONTO INTERNATIONAL Film Festival has always opened its arms to documentaries, members of the nonfiction clan are like second cousins here: welcome to the party, but rarely greeted with the same level of enthusiasm enjoyed by the favorite sons, the dramatic features. But at such a crowded soiree—Toronto hosts 2,000 distributors, sales agents, and programmers, 600 journalists, plus the general public—only a shrinking violet would not be able to make some potentially useful connections. The trick here, as at any major festival, is to make yourself heard above the din.

This year, the festival's twenty-first, documentaries had a more visible platform with the creation the "Real to Reel" section. It's not the first time Toronto has offered a special sidebar of nonfiction films. In the early eighties, festival programmer Kay Armatage was hired to help create just such a thing. But that section was eliminated after nonfiction features like Errol Morris's *Thin Blue Line* started getting theatrical distribution and more mainstream audiences. "They didn't want to be segregated or ghettoized in a documentary section," Armatage recalls. "They wanted to be part of the main program, mixed in with the commercial films. So we mooshed them into First Cinema or Contemporary World Cinema."

And there they remained until this year, when festival programmers again rejiggered the categories. The problem with integrating documentaries into the larger sections, they found, is "they were getting lost in there," Armatage says. "The focus in Contemporary World Cinema seemed to be overwhelmingly toward the narrative films, so we took them out again."

Has "Real to Reel" helped increase the visibility of docs? Documentary filmmaker and Toronto veteran Nick Broomfield responds, "I don't think it makes any difference." No matter; in his book, Toronto is a required stop for documentarians because now it's that for everybody else in the industry. "If you're going to be in the game for awhile, you're going to meet everyone here," he says. "It's the only festival I take seriously, other than Sundance. In Toronto, you can do so much business and meet everyone in a very informal way, and have enormously amusing and ridiculous late-night adventures with them all, which endears you to them for years to come."



SEXY SELL: Nick Broomfield's *Fetishes* proved a delectable treat among festival-goers, while Beth B.'s *Visiting Desire* (below) intrigued.
Photo above: Susan Meiselas/Magnum, courtesy In Pictures

No doubt Broomfield has an easier time at Toronto than many of his colleagues. He's a well-known name (*Aileen Wournos: The Selling of a Serial Killer*; *Heidi Fleiss: Hollywood Madam*, *Monster in a Box*). The topic of his latest film, *Fetishes*, about an up-scale S&M parlor in New York, was guaranteed to pack the house. Then there's Broomfield's considerable skill as a filmmaker, which kept everyone glued to their seats all the way to the end credits, even at the press and industry screening—a rare occurrence indeed. On top of all this, Broomfield had help; his coproducer, Jamie Ader-Browne, and a publicist were on hand to help drum up interest and talk turkey when buyers stepped forth.

Other documentary filmmakers try to do it alone, however, and many find the task daunting. After all, this year they were competing for attention with 273 other films and were up against names like Jean-Luc Godard, Lars van Trier, Arturo Ripstein, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Volker Schlöndorff, and Peter Greenaway, not to mention celebs like Tom Hanks, Demi Moore, and Cher. Louis Massiah (*W.E.B. DuBois: A Biography in Four Voices*), an experienced public television producer but first-time Toronto-goer, admitted, "It would be extraordinarily helpful to have somebody else here with me, whether it's a press agent or somebody on my staff. It's a



hard one to do by yourself."

For help, Massiah turned to the festival's Sales & Industry Office and found it to be well-oiled and extremely helpful. "They really do know everyone. Like when you ask 'What's this little company?' that you've never heard of before, they can give you a very complete rundown of what they do and how they might work with you and whether or not they seem appropriate," he says. "And they know the players. Let's say there are three people listed; they'll say, 'You don't necessarily want to talk to that person, but this person really does have buying power, and this person is more interested in selling.' Very, very helpful."

Toronto is not a film market per se with company booths, but it does go out of its way to help buyers and filmmakers connect. To begin with, the festival puts together a variety of industry lists: buyers by surname, by company name, dates at the festival, and permanent phone and fax numbers (well worth saving). For buyers, there's a list of rights availability and sales agents connected to each film.

Simplifying matters for everyone, the festival moved its headquarters to the Sheraton Hotel across from City Hall this year. This made it much easier to bump into people, now that there was a decently sized lounge area adjoining the press, industry, and festival programmer offices, and a food court beside the twin theaters on the lower floor, where people often took a rushed meal or refueled on caffeine.

The only problem with this move was the distance between the festival's various theaters is no longer walkable. While it isn't that far—just a short cab ride or a few stops on an amazingly clean subway—it's no longer possible to dash from one place to the next in five minutes. As a result, some buyers and press simply stayed put at the Sheraton, restricting their viewing to whatever turned up on the two screens there.



The Epstein brothers, three octagenarian klezmer musicians, experience a surprise come-back in *A Tickle in the Heart*, an engaging documentary by Stefan Schwietert.
Courtesy Eyepop Productions

ONE PROBLEM FILMMAKERS NEVER HAVE at Toronto is attracting large and enthusiastic audiences to the public screenings. Even at the unholy hour of 8:30 on a Sunday morning, a documentary could draw a packed house.

As it happened, the film this Sunday morning turned out to be the most powerful documentary of the festival. *To Speak the Unspeakable: The Message of Elie Wiesel* is the handiwork of a veteran filmmaker Judit Elek, a Hungarian Jew who followed author Elie Wiesel as he retraced his steps from his hometown in the Carpathian Mountains to Auschwitz—the path he took 50 years ago as an adolescent. Elek is smart enough to avoid the trap of many such revisitation films; she knows that nothing Wiesel could say while walking through the concentration camp with a microphone shoved in his face could equal the eloquence of his intimate, highly novelist writings. And so she forgoes interviews with the Nobel Peace Prize-winner, and instead laces his written recollections (beautifully read by William Hurt) throughout the film as we follow the author's footsteps. The past reappears through rare archival footage showing Transylvania's rural Jewish culture before its obliteration: a little boy eating watermelon, horses led through a mountain stream, an Orthodox farmer with hoe. All are lost, and a deeper elegy than this film is hard to imagine.

To Speak the Unspeakable was one of the few documentaries in the Real to Reel sidebar not from the U.S.; nine of the section's 14 films were homegrown. (Not all of the festival's documentaries were clustered here. "Perspective Canada" contained a few, as did "Planet Africa," notably two biopics—Massiah's *W.E.B. DeBois* and St. Claire Bourne's *John Henrik Clarke: A Great and Mighty Walk*—and a fascinating look at Afrofuturism in science fiction, music (think Sun Ra and George Clinton), and space travel, *The Last Angel of History*, by the always innovative British filmmaker John Akomfrah.)

The films attracting the most attention from industry and press were a varied lot. Topping the list were those dealing with sex: at the high end was Broomfield's enormously entertaining *Fetishes*, his first HBO commission (with a $700,000 budget), which aired in the fall and will be theatrically codistributed by In Pictures and Cinema Village beginning this August, and at the low-budget end was Beth B.'s Hi8 quickie *Visiting Desire*. For the latter, B. invited strangers to meet in a bedroom for a half-hour to enact their fantasies.

An interesting concept, *Visiting Desire* is hindered by her participants' evident self-consciousness before the camera and ultimately can't rise above the ordinariness of its subjects.

The dominatrixes of *Fetishes*, on the other hand, are professional performers and very much in control, even ordering Broomfield around on camera. Mistress Raven, the head of the featured S&M parlor, Pandora's Box, suggests Broomfield partake in a session, stating it's his professional responsibility to experience what it is he's documenting. Broomfield coyly declines. "I'm not really that kind of filmmaker," he explained during the festival. "In my other films, I've been a detective; I mean I've never sampled one of Heidi [Fleiss'] girls."

Broomfield's modus operandi is to act as surrogate for his audience, jumping feet-first into a situation and asking questions as he goes. He researches during preproduction only to the extent that he can pinpoint his subject, then the rest of his education happens on camera. "I think the audience needs to come with me from the beginning," he explains.

As an interrogator, Broomfield can be downright cheeky, which adds to the fun—and *Fetishes* is curiously upbeat. Broomfield could easily have taken a different direction. "I was depressed with some of the places we visited," he admits. But the film stays light, moving at a brisk pace ("it would be more depressing if you kept the sequences longer"), with a bit of Mozart to keep it "bubbling along." Broomfield decided against an earlier cut that was more of a soap-opera, with material on the mistresses' marriages and money arguments. But after doing "seven or eight radically different cuts," he chose to go with "a simple film—an introduction to fetishes and the girls."

Music and sports fared almost as well as sex. *Pin Gods*, a Miramax acquisition, plunges into the remote world of professional bowling. The filmmaking team of Larry Locke and Jan Grznar tag along behind three minor leaguers as they shoot for the big-time on the Professional Bowlers' Tour, showing life on the road and (all too) brief glimpses into their personal lives, ambitions, and motivating desires. Stefan Schwietert's *A Tickle in the Heart*, a charming portrait of three octogenarian klezmer musicians, wound up with a theatrical deal with Kino International and a week-long booking at the Walter Reade Theater in January. This black-and-white film tells the story of the Epstein brothers, the "kings of klezmer music" in Brooklyn's immigrant Jewish community during the twenties and thirties, who are now amazed to find themselves experiencing a

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revival as younger people in the U.S., Germany, Poland, and Austria newly embrace this Yiddish folk music.

Two films that raised eyebrows are *Trinity and Beyond: The Atomic Bomb Movie* and *Timothy Leary's Dead*. *Trinity* tells the history of atomic weapons from a purely technical and scientific perspective. Filmmaker Peter Kuran, a special effects expert for the past two decades who has worked on such films as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek 2 & 5*, and *Ghostbusters 2*, clearly loves big explosions and has painstakingly researched and restored an exhaustive parade of nuclear blasts. More interested in preserving history than changing opinions, he says, Kuran nonetheless came in for some criticism by those who felt his grandiose symphonic score, *Top Guns*-like editing, and unironic use of government propaganda films amounted to a defense of nuclear weapons. "People can be interested in something without being an advocate," he responds.

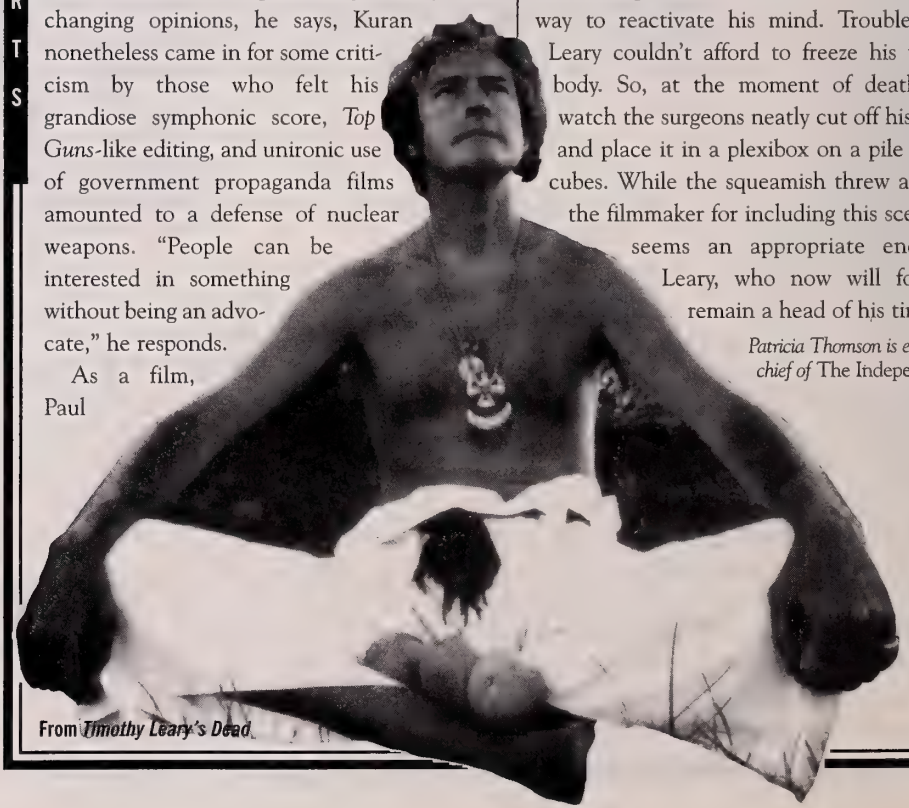
As a film, Paul David's *Timothy Leary's Dead* is nothing out of the ordinary. It's a straightforward biography of this controversial psychologist who was a believer in the benefits of altered consciousness and a purveyor of the "turn on, tune in, and drop out" motto. In many ways, Leary was "A Head of His Time," as the film puns. When he learned of his cancer, he approached death in a manner as unorthodox as the rest of his life. Too sick to carry out his plan to commit suicide before a virtual party of well-wishers on the Web, Leary contracted with a cryogenics company to go into a deep freeze until science could find a way to reactivate his mind. Trouble was, Leary couldn't afford to freeze his whole body. So, at the moment of death, we watch the surgeons neatly cut off his head and place it in a plexibox on a pile of ice cubes. While the squeamish threw a fit at the filmmaker for including this scene, it seems an appropriate end for Leary, who now will forever remain a head of his times.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.



***Trinity and Beyond*, an archival film by special effects wizard Peter Kuran, is unique is its apolitical stance.**

Photos this page courtesy filmmakers



From *Timothy Leary's Dead*

Pictured below: Elie Wiesel (right) visits Auschwitz 50 years later. The power and eloquence of Judit Elek 's documentary *To Speak the Unspeakable: The Message of Elie Wiesel* comes in large part from her liberal use of the author's writings, which convey the meaning of the Holocaust far better than any filmed interview ever could. Wiesel writes:

"For my bar mitzvah, I remember, I received a magnificent gold watch. It was the customary gift for the occasion, and was meant to remind the boys that henceforth they were no longer children and would be held responsible for their acts before the Torah and its timeless laws.

But I could not keep my gift. I had to part with it on the day the Hungarian nationalists, in their fanaticism, decided to rid my native town of each and every one of its Jews.

The time was late April, 1944.

In the early morning hours of that particularl day, the ghetto was changed into a cemertery and its residents into grave diggers. We dug feverishly in the courtyard, the garden, the cellar, consigning to the earth the remains of our toil and belongings accumulated over several generations.

As for me, my only possession was my watch. It meant a lot to me. And so I decided to bury it in a deep hole, three paces from the fence, under a poplar tree whose thick, strong branches seemd to provide a resonably secure shelter.



Twenty years later, having returned to my home town, standing in our garden, in the middle of the night, I remembered the first gift, also the last, I ever received from my parents. I was seized by an irrational, irresistable desire to see it, to see if it was still there, in the spot where I'd hidden it.

Suddenly, in the darkness, once more I am the bar mitzvah child. I recognized the place, and begin to claw the group with my hands.... This night is defying time. I am labouring to exhume not an object, but my childhood, buried and abandoned."

Weisel finds his watch, but after reflection, returns it to the earth, "so some child will discover it and know that his parents were usurpers, that Jews lived there once."

FIELD REPORTS



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field reports

10 Artist Colonies

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

BY PETER STEINBERG

WANTED: SCREENWRITERS SEEKING SOLITUDE. $1,500 and lunch delivered to your doorstep. Will pay to transport you to an all-expenses-paid stay in picturesque countryside. Reside in a quaint cottage, nestled amidst rolling hills. Work undisturbed on a project of your choice. Spend leisure time exchanging ideas with diverse group of artists in an environment pulsing with creativity. Or take a hike up the forest trail and quietly wonder why more filmmakers aren't here.



Villa Montalvo in Saratoga, CA.
Photo courtesy Michael Collopy

THE SUNDANCE INSTITUTE'S WRITERS LAB receives thousands of applications each year for only a handful of spots. Meanwhile, Mark Turner, executive director of the New York Mills Retreat located in rural Minnesota, which offers a $1,500 stipend for a month-long stay, says they received only two applications from filmmakers this year. He's very excited because it's the most they've gotten in their six-year history.

Screenwriting is a craft, and like any craft it takes a tremendous amount of time to master. Yet in filmmaking circles, one often gets the impression that the faster the script is written, the better. A: "I wrote my script in a week. I didn't sleep at all. It just came out." B: "Well, I wrote my script and shot it in one week." Fast, faster, fastest.

Perhaps this is one reason why more screenwriters have yet to come around to the idea of artist colonies. Another might be that they just don't know about this open secret in the literary and art worlds. Also called residencies, retreats, and artists' communities, these are environments where artists can find quality time to practice their craft without distractions—away from the parties, the phone, the television, the relatives, the day job. One can peacefully write a chunk of the great American screenplay, and perhaps even get paid while doing it.

It is estimated that there are over 200 artist colonies in the U.S. Unlike the Sundance Writers Lab or other writers' workshops, artist colonies do not offer any scheduled classes, assignments, panels, or feedback. Like a workshop, they do occasionally schedule guest speakers and readers, but these events are always optional and in the evening, so as not to disturb your work. What artist colonies do provide that screenwriting workshops don't is a great place to meet and exchange ideas with artists in other disciplines—painters, composers, dancers, and writers. Sessions at many colonies range from one week to three months. A few offering housing for couples.

The MacDowell Colony, in Peterborough, New Hampshire, is one residency that has made substantial inroads into recruiting filmmakers. Their research reveals that 114 of

their writers penned work that resulted in produced films, 10 of which received Academy Awards. Still not satisfied, they recently set up a film editing suite, which includes an 8-plate Steenbeck. Cheryl Young, deputy executive director of MacDowell, says, "What we hope is, as soon as the word gets out that we have this editing equipment, that more filmmakers will apply. We really want to get more applications in film."

Generally, the film community makes up about five percent of the applications received by the various colonies. Across the board, residency directors say, "We wish more would apply."

Most artist colonies do not have film or video equipment, but enterprising media-makers have found their way around that. As Charles Amirkhanian, executive director of Djerassi Resident Arts, notes, "We don't have film facilities here, but Barbara Hammer (*Tender Fictions*) brought in her own editing equipment and did what she needed to do on her particular project."

Djerassi and the MacDowell Colony accept screenwriters, but many places don't. If their brochures do not specify, call and ask. If screenwriters are not accepted, tell them to reconsider their policies. Many colonies are under the impression that screenwriting is not a serious art form, or that money is rampant in the filmmaking community and we don't need their help. Obviously, those places haven't had enough exposure to independent filmmakers yet.

The following is a sampling of colonies that welcome filmmakers, videomakers, and screenwriters. The selection was based on stipends, reputation, filmmaker friendliness, in-depth and well-presented information, and positive vibes via telephone interviews.

Because colonies are defined here as a place where work is done in a solitary fashion, valuable workshops such as the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, the Shenandoah International Playwrights Retreat, the Experimental Television Center residencies, and Chesterfield's Writer's Film Project are not included. Also not listed are colonies charging outrageous fees, or those targeting specific states, gender, age, race, religion, or experience.

When applying, work samples are the most significant aspect of your application. It is standard practice to include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your requests for information and an application. Don't call residencies until after you've received information by mail; your questions are probably answered in the application itself.

CENTRUM ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Box 158, Port Townsend, WA 98368; (360) 385-3102; fax: 385-2470; http://www.olympus.net/centrum

Deadline: Oct. 11 (for 1996; call for next year's deadline)

What makes it special: Fully subsidized one-month residencies with stipend of $300. Located at Fort Worden, 440-acre park on Washington's Olympic peninsula.

DJERASSI RESIDENT ARTISTS PROGRAM

2325 Bear Gulch Rd.,Woodside, CA 94062-4405; (415) 747-1250; fax: 747-0105

Deadline: Feb. 15, 1997

What makes it special: No fees. Meals provided. Past attendees include Pat Ferrero, founder of Canyon Cinema, and video artists Sarah Roberts and Valerie Soe. Located 45 miles south of San Francisco on 600 acres of rangeland, redwood forest, and hiking trails.

THE EDWARD F. ALBEE FOUNDATION'S WILLIAM FLANAGAN MEMORIAL CREATIVE PERSONS CENTER

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Deadline: April 1

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LEDIG HOUSE INTERNATIONAL WRITERS COLONY

43 Letter S Rd., Ghent, NY 12075; (518) 392-7656; fax: 392-2848

Deadline: Apply at anytime

What makes it special: No fees. Meals provided. A renovated farmhouse located atop a 130-acre compound overlooking the Catskill Mountains. Their associations include the greater literary community, theater, and film. Professionals from these fields invited to meet with resident writers during each session.

THE MACDOWELL COLONY

100 High St., Peterborough, NH 03458; (603) 924-3886; fax: 924-9142

Deadlines: Jan. 15 for summer; April 15 for fall-winter

What makes it special: No required fees. Meals provided. A film editing suite with an 8-plate Steenbeck. Fundraising plans are underway to expand the editing facility to also include video equipment. Impressive list of past attendees includes Skip Blumberg, Doris Chase, Abigail Child, and Barbara Hammer. Admission panel for filmmaker/screenwriter applications is made up of filmmakers, curators, and others working in the field. Ken Burns (*The Civil War*) on the board of directors.

THE MILLAY COLONY FOR THE ARTS

Box 3, Austerlitz, NY 12017; (518) 392-3103; http://www.millaycolony.org

Deadlines: Sept. 1 for Feb. through May; Feb. 1 for

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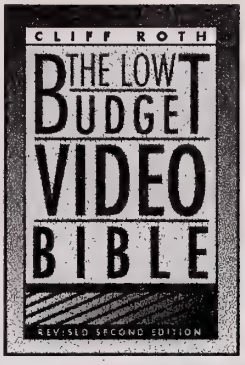
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F I E L D R E P O R T S







Above: Woodside, California is the setting for the Djerassi Resident Artists Program. Photo: Renee Burgard

Below: the famed MacDowell Colony, in New Hamshire. Inset: Lana Lin at work on the colony's editing equipment. Photo: Joanna Eldredge

June through Sept.; May 1 for Oct. through Jan.
What makes it special: No application or residency fee. Meals provided. Long list of distinguished attendees. Great website. You can receive an application via e-mail (application@millaycolony.org).

NEW YORK MILLS ARTS RETREAT
24 North Main Ave., Box 246, New York Mills,

MN 56567; (218) 385-3339; fax: 385-3366; nymills @uslink.net
Deadlines: April 1 for July through Dec. residencies; Oct. 1 for Jan. through June residencies
What makes it special: No residency fees & generous stipend ($750 for two weeks or $1500 for one month) provided in exchange for minimum of 8 hrs per week artistic community outreach. Housing provided at nearby bed and breakfast or you can choose to be housed with a local family.

UCROSS FOUNDATION RESIDENCY PROGRAM
2836 US Highway 14-16 East, Clearmont, WY 82835; (307) 737-2291
Deadlines: October 1 for Feb. through June; March 1 for August through Dec.
What makes it special: No fees. Meals provided. 22,000 acre facility in rural Wyoming sheep and cattle ranching country.

VILLA MONTALVO
Box 158,15400 Montalvo Rd., Saratoga, CA 95071-0158; (408) 741-3421; fax: 741-5594
Deadlines: March 1 for Oct. through March residencies; Sept. 1 for April through Sept. residencies
What makes it special: No fees, several fellowships available; the more creative and unusual the screenplay/film/video project, the better. Bring your own equipment. Applications reviewed by other filmmakers.

YADDO
Box 395 (Union Avenue), Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-0395; (518) 584-0746
Deadline: Jan. 15 for May through Feb.; August 1 for Oct. through May
What makes it special: No fees. Meals provided. One of the oldest and most prestigious colonies, Yaddo opened its doors to artists in 1926. Good for the resume. Acceptance not as difficult as you might think; about 1 in 5 invited to attend.

For further information:

1. *Artists & Writers Colonies*, by Gail Hellund Bowler. $15.95. Published in 1995 by Poets & Writers, (212) 226-3586. A comprehensive guide with 200 listings.

2. *Grants and Awards Available to American Writers*, ed. John Morrone. $13.00. Published annually by Pen American Center, (212) 334-1660; pen@echonyc.com. Great for grants & awards for screenwriters as well.

3. *Dramatists Sourcebook*, ed. Linda MacColl, Kathy Sova and Wendy Weiner. $15.95. Theater Communications Group, Inc., (212) 697-5230. An annual publication for playwrights that also lists screenplay opportunities.

4. *Artists Communities*, by the Alliance of Artists' Communities, 210 S.E. 50th Ave., Portland, OR 97215. $16.95. Published in 1996 by national service organization that supports the field of artists' communities and residency programs.

5. American Council for the Arts's website factsheet of 42 artist communities: http: /www.artsusa.org/hotline.html.

Peter Steinberg is a writer and filmmaker.

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field reports

50 YEARS AND COUNTING

The New York Film Council Goes Silver

BY DEIRDRE BOYLE

FIFTY YEARS AGO THE NEW YORK FILM COUNCIL was founded by a group of dedicated enthusiasts who saw film as a potent means to make a better world. Today, the latest generation of independent mediamakers, distributors, exhibitors, scholars, and critics have found in this relic of the post-war film council movement a friendly, supportive, progressive networking organization. Celebrating their survival in an age of defunding and downsizing, the New York Film/Video Council assembled at the Museum of Modern Art in June to reminisce and reaffirm their commitment to the ever-changing independent media field.

When the council was founded in 1946, the emphasis was on use—making films work for the community. During World War II, 16mm film had proven effective at building morale, training soldiers, and teaching laborers new job skills, and a film council movement emerged that extended these benefits to a post-war world, seeing film as a means of public education coupled with high-minded idealism. The New York Film Council was the second such council formed, and it attracted members to luncheon meetings in the forties with speakers like documentary pioneers John Grierson and Robert Flaherty and film critic Bosley Crowther. By the fifties more than 170 American communities had film councils. Public libraries and organizations like the League of Women Voters used films for discussion of topics like post-war reconstruction, public health, and the United Nations. In the postwar boom years, the numbers of educational, sponsored, and nontheatrical films soared, and sales of 16mm film projectors skyrocketed. Staking out the high ground for film as a means of social change and artistic experimentation was what the New York Film Council did best.

During the fifties, the New York Film Council offered a welcome to filmmakers on the left who were unemployed or working under assumed names, and to people squeezed out of the "old boy network" that quickly dominated the emerging television market, according to past president George Stoney. The council was also the one place in the film community where there was equality of the sexes. This included championing the work of women directors and encouraging the participation of women distributors, exhibitors, and critics such as Rohama Lee, editor of *Film News*, Emily Jones, executive secretary of the Educational Film Library Association, and Sophie Hohne Reu, film distributor.

The Film Council was the only game in town during the fifties, but over the next two decades new organizations emerged to meet specific needs of various segments of the media community. The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, for example, was founded by producers, many of whom participated at an historic Film Council symposium on independent film sponsored by the Ford Foundation in the early seventies. By the eighties, the proliferation of media organizations for women, racial and ethnic producers, and gay and lesbian makers made it seem to some as though the council was no longer essential. But a new generation has joined the council and given it fresh life, inspired by new issues and new media forms that raise some of the same old questions about the public's right of access to a wide spectrum of art and ideas. Today, monthly meetings provide provocative screenings of recent films and tapes from around the world as well as a chance to swap war stories with friends and colleagues.



In 1949, the Film Council fought its first censorship battle over a sex education film, and it continues to fight the good fight. Most recently, the council was a co-plaintiff in a successful countersuit against Donald Wildmon's American Family Association, which tried to suppress distribution of Council member Jonathan Stack's documentary *Damned in the USA*, a film about censorship efforts in various media. With its first foray into the Internet—its Web page features a clip from George Stoney's classic film *All My Babies*—the New York Film/Video Council soon may have to consider a new name as it scrambles to keep up with the technological revolution. Clearly new blood and new ideas are welcome as the board, under the leadership of president Steve Montgomery, defines a new mission for the NYFVC as it moves into the next half century.

NYFVC, Box 1685, New York, NY 10185; (212) 330-0450; http://www.yrd.com/NYFVC/

Deirdre Boyle attended NYFC's symposium, "The Independent Film: Who Needs It?" in 1974. She is the author of Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited *(Oxford Univ. Press, 1996).*

Power Tools

Clinics Help Nonprofits Flourish in a Mass-Media Culture

media education



Organizations like the Sierra Club get savvy about using media through training from Portland's public access center. Courtesy TVCA

BY JESIKAH MARIA ROSS

WHY WOULD MEMBERS OF THE BEAVERTON, Oregon, Sierra Club spend a Tuesday night critiquing TV commercials and news clips? You could say it's a new matter of survival for the environmental organization: The sooner this nonprofit group can speak the media's language, the sooner they can use it for themselves.

At Tualatin Valley Community Access (TVCA) in Portland, Oregon, media action clinics provide media literacy training sessions geared for nonprofit organizations. "Media literacy is central to all our work," says TVCA executive director Paula Manley. "The focus of our training includes critical analysis of media messages, media ownership, and power relationships, in addition to hands-on learning with the tools of television."

TVCA is a nonprofit community media center at the forefront of a movement within the cable access field that stresses media literacy training rather than video production classes. TVCA provides media literacy training to individuals as well as community organizations throughout the Tualatin Valley, an area that is home to rural farmlands and forests as well as suburbs and a burgeoning high tech industry.

Manley is passionate about ensuring that grassroots groups have access to media literacy training as well as media distribution systems. "Media tools are power tools," she says. "Media access is important, but learning to understand and use media effectively is equally important."

Among the nonprofit groups who have gone on to develop their own productions are the Tualatin Riverkeepers, a grassroots group that developed PSAs to promote its river clean-up activities; the Easter Seal Society, which produces a monthly educational program for people with disabilities, their families and friends; and the Girl Scouts, who participate in an annual "TV Camp" during spring break.

TVCA manages 10 public, education, and government (PEG) access channels on two cable systems in the Tualatin Valley and has trained more than 2,000 people in media literacy since 1992. "Community media centers like TVCA have a unique potential to combine media education with the practice of communication," says TVCA education director and independent producer Fred Johnson.

As for the Sierra Club members, discussion is lively as they hash out details of the ads, such as what kind of messages are conveyed, whose point of view is represented, who is the intended audience, and which technical tricks are used. TVCA trainer Marjorie Brown then leads the group in a hands-on "video interviews" exercise with camcorders. After everyone has a turn in front of and behind the camera, they use Brown's questions to guide their discussion. What is the effect of the close-up shot? What about the shot with all that headroom, or the one with the low camera angle?

A few months later, the Sierra Club is putting their media education into action with a public access series. The first program deals with commercial logging on public land and includes a newscast from the studio, roll-in footage, and a discussion of policy issues.

"We took TVCA's training to learn what it takes to make television and develop a series," says Carol Porto, executive chair of the Sierra Club's Columbia Group of the Oregon Chapter. "We wanted to be behind as well as in front of the camera to get information out to a greater audience."

Like the mainstream media, the Sierra Club now knows that every technical act creates meaning; all media messages are carefully constructed.

jesikah maria ross is a media activist and educator based in Davis, CA. She is currently part of the University of California Davis Community Development Graduate Group.

a moment

THE PRIVATE VISION OF PETER HUTTON

BY SCOTT MACDONALD

CONVENTIONAL OVERVIEWS OF FILM HISTORY RARELY BEGIN MUCH before the Lumière Brothers's development of the Cinématographe and the Edison laboratory's development of the Kinetoscope. However, if we see film history in its broadest sense, the roots of contemporary film practice are obviously much older and more diverse than the conventional histories of film suggest.

The silent, slow-paced meditative films of Peter Hutton are an obvious example. Hutton's films reveal a commitment to the individual shot that is purposely reminiscent of the Lumière brothers' commitment to the single-shot film, the photograph-in-motion: often each shot in a Hutton film is separated from the next shot by a moment of black leader.

At the same time, Hutton's approach has roots in forms of the moving image that predate the Cinématographe by decades: most obviously, Phillipe Jacques de Loutherbourg's Eidophusikon and Louis Daguerre's Diorama, which provided viewers with contemplative images of natural and urban scenes in much the way that, since the early 1970s, Hutton's films have provided contemplative views of cities—most often, New York, in *New York Near Sleep for Saskia* (1972), *New York Portrait: Part I* (1979), *New York Portrait: Part II* (1981), *New York Portrait, Part III* (1990); but also Boston, in *Boston Fire* (1979); Budapest, in *Budapest Portrait (Memories of a City)* (1986); and Lodz, in *Lodz Ghetto* (1994)—and of natural landscape, in *Landscape (for Manon)* (1987), *In Titan's Goblet* (1991), and *Study of a River* (in progress).

In fact, Hutton's commitment to depicting the Hudson Valley region (where he has taught film production at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, since 1985) locates him within another tradition: the Hudson River School of painting. Hutton's landscape imagery is often reminiscent of the landscapes of Thomas Cole (*In Titan's Goblet* is named for an eponymous 1833 Cole painting) and Frederic E. Church, not only in a literal sense—Hutton has filmed some of the very locations painted by Cole, Church, and other Hudson River painters—but in terms of his attitude toward landscape.

While Hutton's approach to filmmaking seems a very long way from Hollywood moviemaking—not only in his choice of imagery and meditative pacing, but also in his consistent commitment to black and white (until now, none of his films have included color imagery) and silence (few films feel as silent as Hutton's)—and even from much critical cinema, Hutton is part of a distinguished, and generally undervalued, tradition of filmmakers who use the motion picture camera to record the familiar world in such a way as to reveal its sensual beauty and appeal to the viewer's desire for visual subtlety, a tradition that in the United States includes such filmmakers as Ralph Steiner, Rudy Burckhardt, Nathaniel Dorsky, Larry Gottheim, and Andrew Noren. And his work seems to have had a positive impact on at least one commercial filmmaker, documentarian Ken Burns.

MacDonald: You've been making films since the late sixties. But for a long time, I just couldn't *see* your work; I couldn't connect with it. Then about the time of *Landscape (for Manon)*, I not only could see the films, but found that when I included a film of yours in a program dealing with landscape, your film would be the one people would rave about. All of a sudden, there's an enthusiastic audience for your films, and not just an experimental film audience. Have you been having this experience?

Hutton: It depends on how the films are contextualized. The issues I'm interested in—landscape, urbanscape—are about a moment of seeing, a very removed, private glimpse of things that we're all totally familiar with. Because of that familiarity, a lot of people were dismissive of my work for a while, but over time some people have developed an appreciation for a film experience that is completely outside any other cinematic reference, whether it's documentary, narrative, TV commercials, MTV, whatever.... So many of the images of beauty that we've become familiar with in cinema are contextualized within certain kinds of polemic. I think some people appreciate that my work is not encumbered by ideas. So much of cinema has a hidden, or maybe not-so-hidden, agenda. If there's one thing I can say about my work, it's that there is no purpose to it other than just allowing someone into my visual sensibility. I've never experienced any overwhelming response to my films, and I

don't really expect that, because my work is relatively private and personal.

You could say, "Well, Peter's got his own agenda: he's creating these personal records of how he sees the world, a romanticized, overly aestheticized vision of the world, which overwhelms the work." That's a current critique. But I also think many people are liberated by my work because of its lack of an overriding intent other than my reminding them of a certain kind of repose. In our manipulative, kinetic, time-is-money world, there's an appreciation for a respite from overriding intent.

MacDonald: We used to say that people went to the movies to escape their humdrum lives and have an exciting experience. But now our lives are so loaded, so layered—we all passed the "Type A" personality ten years ago—that there's something wonderful about getting into a space where we can be *still*.

Hutton: Most people go to films to get some kind of hit, some kind of overwhelming experience, whether it's like an amusement park ride or an ideological, informational hit. But for those few people who feel they need a reprieve occasionally, who want to cleanse the palate a bit, these films seem to be somewhat effective.

I've never felt that my films are very important in terms of the History of Cinema. They offer a little detour from such grand concepts. They appeal primarily to people who enjoy looking at nature, or who enjoy having a moment to study something that's not fraught with information. The experience of my films is a little like daydreaming. It's about taking the time to just sit down and look at things, which I don't think is a very Western preoccupation. A lot of influences on me when I was younger were more Eastern. They suggested a contemplative way of looking. It's like sitting and looking at a painting; at first it might not grab you, but the longer you look at it, the more things reveal themselves. It might just be a formal composition

of seeing



The Hudson River revisited. From *Study of a River* (in progress).
All photos courtesy filmmaker

that takes a while to develop, but as soon as you engage with it, you feel much more satisfied because you're actually interacting with the work. So much contemporary art is shouting at us.

MacDonald: You talk about the viewer's experience in looking at your work as a kind of meditative reprieve in the midst of the hysteria of contemporary life. Is your *making* films an analogous experience for you?

Hutton: Oh yes, very much so. I often tell people my passion in film is just collecting images, looking through the lens and seeing things that I really respond to, and recording them. After that, I'm often in a quandary as to what to do with the images. I'm much less involved in the idea of structuring films, packaging images.


from *Boston Fire* (1979)

MacDonald: How much of what you collect ends up in the films?

Hutton: Roughly ten percent. My motto is, "Seek and you will find." So as long as I go out with some regularity, I'm bound to come back with something interesting. I've never gone out and brought back nothing.

When I was living in New York City, I would see potentially interesting things, but they wouldn't quite congeal cinematically so I would shoot them repeatedly. There's a shot in *New York Portrait: Part I* of these pigeons flying over Soho. I was living in Little Italy and had observed this neighbor who would go up on his roof every day and ritually let these pigeons out of the cage. They would engage in these wonderful flying patterns. I began to see that there was a lead pigeon that would take the others on this little pattern through the sky. When I filmed these movements, my imagery wouldn't look visually as significant as what I was seeing with my eyes, so I would shoot it repeatedly—until finally one day the movement of an airplane and a beautiful cloud provided the perfect backdrop for the pattern of the birds flying.

On the other hand, part of the pleasure of obsessively collecting imagery is that spontaneously you get fantastic stuff you've not even contemplated. For me, it's important to get out with a camera and interact with the world.

MacDonald: So how do the films get their final shape?

Hutton: The structuring happens over a period of time. I just digest the images, and almost subliminally the films realize a structure. Of course, I edit and project repeatedly, and often obsessively. But in terms of actually figuring out how to put one image next to the other, there's no plan. Designing a structure that becomes a significant part of the film is the antithesis of what I do. My structures are a result of what the images tell me. It's less an intellectual than an intuitive process.

You know, there's a very simple idea behind what I do, which is to try to take people back in time, rather than forward into the future. I reference a time when there hadn't been a sophisticated history of cinema. The Lumière films are a revelation when you see them in this day and age, because there's a certain kind of innocence to how they were structured. They

weren't designed either to be narrative or documentary. The Lumières were not intent on providing you with a bigger idea that results from the culmination of images. Rather, they explored places without a lot of baggage; they responded to things as they came. That's precious to me.

MacDonald: But in their historical context, the Lumières were probably trying to be as exciting as they could be, to sell the Cinématographe. In a way, your films are the Lumières the way we wished they were, or "the Lumières do Zen."

There is also a connection between your films and painting. There are moments in *Landscape (for Manon)* right out of Thomas Cole, not only in the sense that you're filming the same mountains he painted, but in your desire to go backwards instead of forwards. Cole was painting the way things had been, as a polemic against what he saw as the over-development of the American landscape.

There are also photographic analogies. In *In Titan's Goblet*, it's as if you're *doing* Alfred Stieglitz. Or if I look at the New York portraits, it's as if you're *doing* Charles Sheeler. I'm assuming you have a kind of double consciousness: looking at the image as part of your film, but being aware of the history of representing cityscape and landscape.

Hutton: That's totally accurate. I've had a lot people come up and say my films are like an art history class. I was first a sculptor and then a painter and finally a filmmaker. I bring with me what I responded to as a developing artist. When I first saw Ansel Adams's photographs, I thought how incredibly potent and poignant these frozen moments in time were. And I could say the same thing about [Henri] Cartier-Bresson, and a lot of photographers.

But it's the idea of bringing a sense of time into these renditions of nature that excites me about cinema. My films are a way of subtly tweaking that formal approach to beauty, but allowing another language to come in: movement and transformation. On the other hand, there's often an attempt to "stop time" in my films, letting time be an overriding element that provides some small revelation about the image. Mine is an extremely reductive strategy.

MacDonald: For me, your films provide metaphors for recognizing the Now-ness of particular physical phenomena that will never happen again in precisely the same way.

Hutton: I often think this value of my work will not really be apparent until a lot of time has passed. When I made *Lodz Symphony*, I said to my Polish friends, "You know, this film is not going to make any sense to you now, but in ten or fifteen years you may well appreciate that someone actually recorded the atmosphere of this city at this particular time." Atget recorded the details of the architecture, the atmosphere, the ambiance of the streets of Paris in his time with loving care. At first, those images didn't seem to have any great value—they were too familiar—but, as time has gone on, they've increased in value. They've become miniature museums.

MacDonald: You've been a teacher for most of your filmmaking life. You've also worked as a cinematographer. I know you've worked a number of times for Ken Burns. When I found out that you knew Burns at Hampshire College, it occurred to me that one of the dimensions that gives his best work its power is the slow pacing and the use of images of nature that run longer than most documentarians would feel comfortable with.

Hutton: Ken was my student, but I never felt I had an overt influence on him. Jerry Leibling was probably the seminal influence on all these young kids who came out of Hampshire at that time. He was a wonderful photographer and a very compassionate humanist. When I was teaching at Hampshire, I had finished a long film about living in California: *July '71 in San Francisco, Living at Beach Street, Working at Canyon Cinema, Swimming in the Valley of the Moon* [1971]. It was a diary of my life as a student and it had a particular photographic quality, which according to Elaine Mayes, who had shown the film, the Hampshire kids were knocked out by. Ken always cites this film as an early influence. There was a strong photographic formalism that he got off on.

MacDonald: You worked [as cinematographer] on Red Grooms's *Hippodrome Hardware* [1973] and *Ruckus Manhattan* [1976], on *Born in Flames* [1983, directed by Lizzie Borden], and on several Ken Burns films.

Hutton: Yes, *The Statue of Liberty* [1985], *Baseball* [1995], and the Thomas Jefferson film, which is in progress.

MacDonald: Not *The Civil War*?

Hutton: He wanted me to do something for that, but I couldn't. He wanted to strap me into a Steadycam! Ken's a sweet kid and very generous: he always asks me if I want to do something on his films. I think he's just being nostalgic. I suspect Ken sees me as this old relic. Until I saw *The Civil War* I wasn't that interested in what he was doing, though I am impressed by the success of his work. Ken's cameraperson, Buddy Squires (who was briefly my teaching assistant at Hampshire), has an excellent eye, so it's not necessary for Ken to borrow *my* eye for his films.

Of course, the shocking thing is that often when you do work with other people, you get caught up in what you're doing and think it's really beautiful and important. Then you see the final film and they've used twenty seconds of what you shot. When other people ask you to participate in a project, you're flattered, but when you analyze their final product, you realize your contribution didn't amount to much. It's different when I work on a feature as a DP, of course. Then I'm able to have a significant influence on the look of a picture.

I just shot a feature on the Erie Canal for Phil Hartman [*Eerie*, 1996], and I was director of photography for his *No Picnic* [1986, which received the best cinematography award at Sundance]. I think he decided to use me because of my interest in recording journeys, which is something that developed out of my working on ships as a merchant seaman.

MacDonald: You studied at the San Francisco Art Institute. Were particular people there formative for you?

Hutton: There were a lot of phenomenally interesting people there at the time. Robert Nelson, who was one of my first film teachers, I always admired very much. I never studied with Bruce Conner, but he was around. *A Movie* [1958] was a big influence on me. And we had William T. Wiley, the painter, and Bruce Nauman, the sculptor, whom I studied with briefly. Bruce Baillie fits in there at some point, even though he wasn't a teacher. His amazingly poetic rendering of image and sound was very much in evidence.

Before I went to San Francisco, I lived in Hawaii for several years. That was where I first began shipping out as a merchant seaman. A lot of my teachers were Chinese or Japanese, and I got engaged in an Eastern sensibility about art, about nature, which really slowed me down.

When I came to the Art Institute, I *was* amazed by the proliferation of sixties work, from street theater to experimental film to light shows to the music. For a while I felt very excited about the idea of taking art out of the studio. I'd organize fifty people, dress them up in plastic garbage bags, give them all whistles, and we'd walk through the streets to a big park where we'd create a moving figure-eight configuration—a wacky celebration of an earthquake or something. Then, someone gave me a movie camera and said, why don't you record one of these performances so you have a record of it? I went up on the roof of the school and filmed an event I had choreographed. When I got the film back, I was struck by how beautiful the film record was. And I thought, maybe I can just film things and not worry about creating events. From that moment, I started making films.

MacDonald: It's almost a cliché to see the technological/historical connection between filmmaking and train travel. The visual sensibility I get from your films seems closer to travel by boat, where you spend long periods of time looking at a relatively unchanging but always subtly different scene.

Hutton: That's another wonderful, romantic tradition that's gotten away from us: the travelogue. I was nurtured on the tradition of the free spirit wandering around the world, recording impressions. When I was young, it was a great ticket to adventure, as well as an educational opportunity.

One of the great revelations of traveling by sea is how slow it is compared to airplane or even train travel. You can actually go backwards in time on a ship, you can sail into a storm and make no headway, no geographic progress.

One of my great moments in traveling by sea happened one night going across the Indian Ocean en route to the Persian Gulf and encountering a storm. I was up on the bow, at probably about three in the morning. It was completely dark: the sky was clouded up so there were no stars or moon to illuminate anything. All of a sudden I felt the temperature change. I was getting colder and colder, and then I realized it was getting even darker. It was like going into an inkwell, and I had this revelation that there were all these declensions of darkness. Pretty soon it started to rain and the seas kicked up rather dramatically and the mate on the bridge shined a light down and told me to come up. As I was turning around, a big wave dipped over the bow. It could have washed me over. I scurried up to the bridge and continued to observe the storm from up there. We punched through the storm and it started getting warmer, and the rain stopped, and it got lighter and lighter. It was an extraordinary experience, and so visually interesting—but too subtle to record with a movie camera. Being on the ship forced me to slow down, and allowed me to take time to look.



From *Study of a River* (in progress)
Below: Hutton the Mariner

Scott MacDonald teaches American Studies and Film Studies at Utica College of Syracuse University. An expanded version of this interview will appear in A Critical Cinema 3 *(Univ. of California Press, 1997).*

Self-Distribution 101

A Producers' Primer for the Educational Market

BY BECKY SMITH

THE OTHER NIGHT I WAS AT A MEETING OF INDEpendent FILMmakers in Los Angeles. We were talking about educational and home video distribution for documentaries. One guy said to me, "Oh, I wouldn't self-distribute. That's just way too much of your own time."

"Let me ask you this," I replied. "Are you pleased with the film you worked on for three or four years?"

"Yeah, I really like the film."

"Are you happy with your distributor?"

"Yeah, pretty happy," he offered.

I said, "Okay, this is pretty personal, but could you tell me what you made off the film this year?"

"I did okay."

"Well, what's okay?"

"I got paid twice a year, and I think I got about a thousand dollars for the year."

"You're happy with that?" I asked.

"Yeah, it's all right."

"Well," I replied, "in my first six months of self-distribution, we took in $27,000. And that was starting out, not knowing what we were doing."

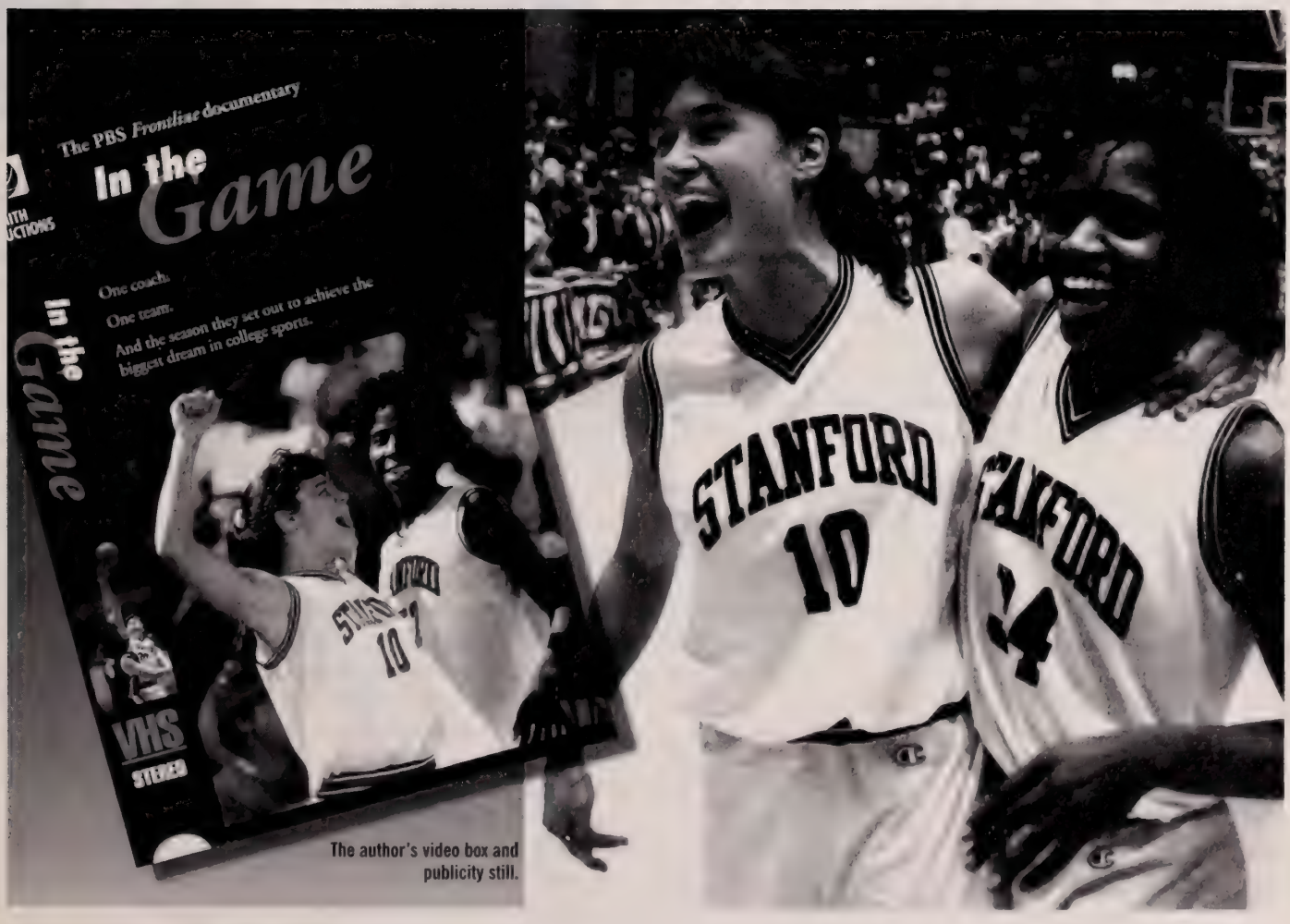
I guess I can be considered an evangelist for self-distribution.

Never underestimate the breadth of your audience. Producer Becky Smith found that more than jocks were interested in her film on a team of women athletes, *At right*, two of Stanford's basketball stars in the author's *Frontline* production, *In the Game*. All photos courtesy Becky Smith

THE FIRST THING TO UNDERSTAND IS WHERE YOUR MARKETS ARE. There are a limited number for documentaries. If it's appropriate and if you're lucky, you'll have a television broadcast in the United States. The domestic educational market in the U.S. is also very important. Then there's home video, foreign television, and foreign educational. If you've got a very special documentary, you might have the possibility of a limited theatrical release.

These markets are different from one another, and you have to approach them in different ways. You should heed the first rule of distribution: do *not* sell all your rights to one distributor. They're going to tell you—at least at the beginning—"I want the rights to everything." The answer is an emphatic no. There's no distributor who can be sufficiently knowledgeable in all markets.

But you probably can't be knowledgeable in all markets



The author's video box and publicity still.

Do your homework. Will your film be listed along with 300 others in a big beautiful catalog, which a harried teacher will flip through to pick one or two products? You might have signed with a prestigious distributor, but remember, you are just one tiny film in a big book.

either, assuming you want to remain a filmmaker first and foremost, not devote all your time to learning the distribution trade. There are good reasons to hand your film over to someone else. I have a distributor for foreign TV and foreign educational, because these are such specialized markets. You'll get a sense of whether your work is appropriate for theatrical release by how well you do on the festival circuit. I would go to a distributor for that, although you can certainly try to book yourself into the specialty houses by getting on the phone and schmoozing these people across the country, sending them a clip and appropriate publicity materials.

When you're looking for a distributor of any kind, you must find someone who believes in your product. Of course, every distributor who wants your film is going to tell you they believe in it. They'll go, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Great. Love it. Love it." But *how much* do they love it?

Do your homework. Find out exactly how they're going to market it. Are they going to do a flyer that's *just* your film? If so, how many people will this go to? Or will your film be listed along with 300 others in a big beautiful catalog, which a harried teacher will flip through to pick one or two products? You might have signed with a prestigious distributor, but remember, you are just one tiny film in a big book. Or maybe your film is completely unique within their roster, leading you to ask, "You don't have any other films like mine, so how do you know how to market it?"

You'll need to ask all these questions of any distributor. But you'll ultimately have to ask the same questions *about yourself* when deciding whether to self-distribute.

Another reality to consider is how much money you'll make when you go with a distributor. Nowadays I'd say it's 20 to 25 percent of gross. When you look at your contract, you've got to see whether you're getting a percentage of gross rentals and exactly how that's defined, or whether you get your percentage after costs are deducted for publicity, mailings, and other expenses.

It's a very heady thing to think people want your film. "That's so cool," you say. "I've got four distributors interested in it. I'm psyched." So you sign a contract and think, "I signed with a distributor. I'm really there."

Then you know what often happens? You sit and nothing happens for months. Then you get a paycheck and it's for $300. If that's something that would drive you crazy, you should self-distribute.

Setting up shop

IT TAKES A YEAR TO GET GOING. THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE. We did well in the first six months and even better the second six, but it takes a full year to get up to speed. When you're soul-searching to figure out if you want to self-distribute, you should look at the realistic lifespan of your film.

There are three general structures for self-distribution: 1) just you; 2) you with a fulfillment middle-man (who warehouses all your tapes, takes phone orders, and mails out your film. You'll get a statement every month that shows the agreed-upon cut, and a monthly check); 3) a distribution co-op, such as New Day Films [see "A Bright New Day: Why a 25-Year-Old Distribution Co-op Could be the Wave of the Future," May 1996].



If you decide to go it alone, there are common-sense things you'll need in the office:

- A toll-free number.
- A fax machine.
- A separate phone line, even if you're operating out of your spare room or garage.
- An answering machine, especially one that can route calls to the fax machine.
- A credit card merchant account. (I would say a third of our business is by credit card.)
- A computer with at least three software applications: a business program like Quicken, a database mailing list program, and a word processing program.
- Finally, you'll need to establish a business name and possibly design a logo. If your own name is contained in the business name, you don't need to file it legally. Otherwise, you'll have to file a standard "doing business as" or ("DBA") notice in the newspaper. If you incorporate, there's a whole different set of requirements that you'll want to discuss with a lawyer.

So what are your initial costs?

First, you have to duplicate tapes. I made an initial run of 500, which, in hindsight, was too many. Even though I paid about $2.50 per tape, the quantity discount wasn't worth having all that money sitting in tapes—money that may take several months to get back. I'd recommend runs of 50 or 100. You're experimenting; you don't know how many people are going to buy your film, so don't copy that many. To save upfront costs, you can even wait until you have a sense of how many orders are coming in before duplicating your tape.

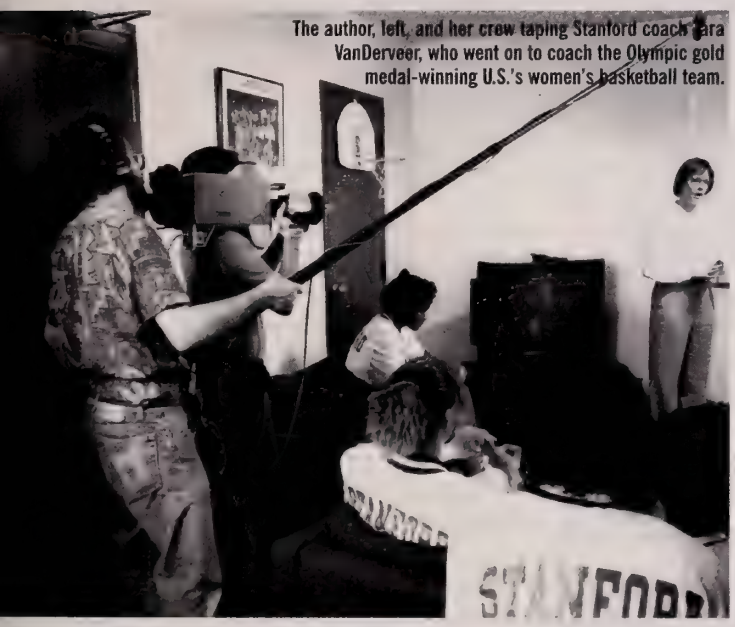
Then there's the promotional materials. If you or a friend can design these on a computer, you're going to save a bundle of money. I do very big print runs—30,000 mailers at a time. It costs about $1,600 to print 20,000 four-color glossy brochures. Designing the tape jackets cost me about $1,000, because I use color photography. I can get the duplication cost for the jackets down to around 20 cents each, but to do so I must print 3,000 at a time. I have tons of these sitting around, waiting to be used.

You're also going to have to buy mailing lists and create and print study guides.

All told, from the $27,000 I grossed in the first six months of self-distribution, I paid out $12,000 in start-up costs, some of which were one-time expenses.

How much time does self-distribution take out of your day?

On a typical day, you'll get a few phone calls—between three and seven—which you'll have to return. Tracking down teachers can require more than one call. You'll get maybe one request every few days for a preview tape. The returned preview tapes have to be noted on the computer. You'll get a couple of new



The author, left, and her crew taping Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer, who went on to coach the Olympic gold medal-winning U.S.'s women's basketball team.

orders in the mail every day, plus a few checks from orders you sent out two months ago. Once a week we deposit the money and ship tapes. When someone buys a tape, we send it out with an invoice and thank-you card. These go by UPS rather than by regular mail, so you can call UPS to track down a lost tape, if necessary.

Something you've got to accept is that you're always owed money—for me, it's about $5,000, representing a two-month lag in purchase orders. We scan outstanding purchase orders every month and send out reminder billings. Get used to it; it's just like any other business.

Finding your audience

BE CREATIVE WHEN IDENTITYING YOUR AUDIENCE, BECAUSE IT may be much wider than you think.

For example, I assumed the primary audience for my hour-long film on college women athletes, *In the Game*, would be coaches and young women athletes. But after it ran on PBS's *Frontline*, I started getting calls from corporate people who lead employee motivation sessions. IBM bought a number of tapes. I then realized I had a whole motivational slant. Then I found strong interest from women's studies classes. I also had a tremendous response from sports psychology classes. Calls came in from boys' and girls' clubs and their mentoring programs. I never realized what a big market existed in summer sports camps. It's surprising how many unforeseen markets there are, which is why it's good to brainstorm a marketing overview.

Even before finishing your film, you have to start preparing to market it, assembling the kind of eye-catching information that will go on a promotional brochure. I can't emphasize enough: *Get a photographer when you're shooting.* It's critical to have wonderful photographs, and it won't work to grab stills from the video. It's money well spent; you'll use good photos in all sorts of ways.

At the fine-cut stage, send your film to top people in the field pertinent to your film and ask for an endorsement. Once it's complete, write a press release saying this marvelous film has just been finished. It may feel a little bogus, but do it anyway and send it to magazines, journals, and anybody else who would be appropriate. Submit the film to the educational journals that circulate to teachers. Some of the most important ones are *Library Journal, Video Library, Book List,* and *Rethinking the Schools.* You'll make sales if they choose to review your film; many teachers order based on these recommendations. The nice thing about some of these journals is that they'll only review films they admire, so if they don't like your film, you won't get a negative review. Also go to the journals that cover your subject; for me these were *Scholastic Coach, Women's Sports and Fitness,* and *Coaching Magazine.* Whenever a journal reviewed our film, we talked to the editors and built a relationship. As a result, I know they'll seriously consider any film we send them in the future. They may not like it, but they'll look at it seriously.

If you are a writer as well as a filmmaker, try to write an article about the production. Otherwise, try to interest a journalist in a production story. I did a lot of radio interviews; one was about what it's like being a documentary filmmaker trying to get funding. You never know what angle will help get visibility.

Now you're ready to design your promotional brochure. You need to come up with a blurb about the film and incorporate the reviews and endorsements. Don't forget your toll-free number and a P.O. Box or address. The brochure might indicate who the work is appropriate for and list all the ways educators can use it.

You should design your video jacket at the same time. I had quotes from newspapers, a list of possible uses, a blurb about the film, and riveting, emotional pictures. Don't forget to put an eye-catching picture on the jacket's spine, in case you end up selling in a book store or retail outlet.

Conventions are another key way to promote your film. We went to the women's Final Four in 1995. Every coach at that convention walked past our table, where we had flyers and tapes. Outside the convention hall doors, our film played continously on a big television monitor. I would walk out there and sometimes there would be 30 people standing around watching the film. I didn't make as many sales as I thought I might, because, by that time, a lot of people had already bought the film. But I am certain that not one person left that convention who did not know about my film.

You may not make your expenses back right at the convention. My direct costs entailed five nights of hotel, the booth and

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electrical hook-up, a sign for the booth, and airfare to send two people to work at the booth. We spent about $3,000 on that particular convention, and made $1,500. But if I make another film that has anything to do with women's sports, I've got an audience and a track-record with these people.

Direct Mail

ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE—AND UNFORTUNATELY, THE MOST EXPENSIVE—WAYS TO market is through direct mail. It's costly because postage is very expensive, even at nonprofit bulk mail rates.

It's weird to think of the post office as your friend. But when designing your flyer, you should definitely sit down with someone from the post office to get exact specifications for your mailing. They'll tell you how heavy and what size it can be before bumping up to a higher rate. They'll explain exactly how to sort and bundle your mailing by zip-code in order to get bulk rates. You can do this yourself, or pay a warehouse to do it. If you do a major mailing yourself, like we did, you can expect it to take a couple of weeks of your life every year.

Who should you mail to? There are various ways to get mailing lists, but for the educational market I go to Market Data Retrieval [475 Sansome St., Ste. 1700, San Francisco, CA 94111-3103; 1-800-333-8802]. They have a computer system that allows you to set very specific parameters when culling from their tens of thousands of schools. Do you want, for instance, administrators or teachers? The main person in the department, or all the teachers? Men or women? High schools that have a budget over "x" per student (i.e., enough money to buy a video)? You can easily come up with seven to ten variables to put in the computer.

Then you have to test the list and see what kind of response you get. A very good return on direct mail is two percent. An excellent return is four percent. Half of one percent is just squeaking by.

The best mailing list is the most accurate one. Inaccurate lists waste money. The nice thing about big outfits like Market Data Retrieval is they clean up their database every year. There's a lot of turnover with teachers, and your mailing will go to nowhereland if have a wrong name. You won't ever know it, because the post office doesn't return bulk mail to sender.

Previews, Prices & Study Guides

BEFORE YOU SPEND THOUSANDS ON A MASS MAILING, YOU NEED TO TALK TO THE KINDS of teachers you imagine will want your product. Ask them, "If you had my film, what would you do with it? What would you want from me? How much are you willing to pay for it?" And most critically: "What time of year do you buy?" That's a major factor in the educational market. You'll find the best time to do mailings is in February and August.

Previewing is very important to teachers; you must be absolutely willing to accomodate this. My preview tape shows 20 minutes of the most dramatic moments in the film, and then it's black. We have about 20 preview tapes out at any one time. I don't charge for previews; I take it as a loss. I pay to ship it to them, and they pay to send it back (which they always do).

In the educational market, you definitely have to offer a study guide. Don't let this intimidate you. Even teachers who buy a first-grade novel get an accompanying study guide. They may be simple pamphlets or one-page sheets that, ideally, fit inside the video case. They don't have to cost much (I got mine down to 70 cents). I hired a middle school and a high school teacher to write mine. They each showed a copy of the film to their class, conducted a discussion, then wrote out the questions and issues that came up. I paid them about $300 altogether. Then I edited their text, added an overview of the documentary, production notes, and suggestions on ways teachers can use the film and how to prepare their students before showing it. We created two

instructional parts to the guide, one for middle schools and one for high schools. We added information on equity in sports and Title 9, the amendment that required schools receiving federal funding to give equal opportunities to women and men, plus a list of resources. Finally, we included an order form, just in case they wanted to order more than one. My first run of study guides was 500, and my second was 250.

Pricing for educational sales of VHS tapes should run approximately as follows: For colleges, it's between $100 and $200. For high schools, between $75 and $130. For nonprofit organizations, between $40 and $75. I price my film at $100 for high schools and $150 for colleges and libraries.

When you price your film in a sensible way, do not be intimidated by someone who calls and says, "I'm a high school teacher, and I couldn't possibly pay that much." There will always be someone who takes this line. You will just have to explain that this is what you need to break even or make a profit.

To recap, the decision to self-distribute should be based on several considerations:

- Is the program strong and of wide interest?
- Do you have the time and energy to create business and battle plans?
- Do your goals fit with self-distribution, or will it take you away from work you consider more important?
- Will the responsibilites of self-distribution tie your stomach in knots?

Finally, whether or not you take on self-distribution, remember that you have rights and responsibilities for your program's destiny.

Becky Smith is an adjunct professor in UCLA's School of Film and is currently finishing a half-hour drama, Death by Vertigo. *This is an edited transcript of a workshop presented at the National Educational Media Network, Oakland, CA, May 1995. It will be part of FIVF's Self-Distribution Toolkit, which will be available by summer 1997, and it is the first in a new series of articles in* The Independent *on self-distribution. Next month: The hows and whys of 4-walling.*

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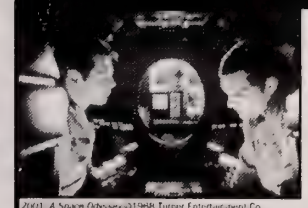


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Film Writes



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Up Troublesome Creek

A Case Study

BY

At the beginning of the year, Jeanne Jordan and Steve Ascher were sitting pretty. Their film *Troublesome Creek: A Midwestern*, which opens next month, had garnered both the audience and the jury award for best documentary at the Sundance Film Festival, and shortly thereafter it went on to receive an Oscar nomination from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. What did these accolades ultimately do for the film? The story of the making and selling of *Troublesome Creek* provides an interesting case study in how small, personal documentaries are brought to fruition and to market.

What this movie lacks is a final definitive budget, which in itself says something about the nature of such projects. While Ascher estimates that cash expenses added up to approximately $400,000, the project's total cost is difficult to pin down because so much was donated, deferred, or in-kind, and the process stretched over so many years. Jordan and Ascher served as their own crew. Ascher was cinematographer, gaffer, and grip; Jordan recorded sound and covered all the remaining crew positions. Only two other people are mentioned in the crawl-ups: composer Sheldon Mirowitz and sound editor Victoria Garvin Davis. The rest of the credits provide a clue as to how the film was pulled together. Fifteen agencies and foundations are listed that helped fund the movie. These are followed by acknowledgments of gratitude to 109 individuals and organizations that volunteered support or lent equipment. This is the story of how it all came together.



Jeanne Jordan and Steven Ascher
All photos courtesy filmmakers

This "Midwestern" starts in the spring of 1990 on the night Jeanne spoke to her father and learned that a possible bankruptcy might force him to sell the farm that had been in their family for 125 years. Jordan says before she and her husband, Steve Ascher, went to sleep that night, they decided to document whatever happened to her family in the coming months. The couple had often spoken of making a film about Jordan's experience growing up on a farm or about her family's history in Iowa, but a specific story never crystallized. Now, all of a sudden, it looked like something concise, with a beginning, middle, and end, might be developing. After that night's decision, Jordan says, "We never turned back. Once we had the conversation, it was clear we just had to do it."

Two weeks later, the couple from Cambridge, Massachusetts loaded up their gear and a dozen 400 foot rolls of 16mm film and flew to Iowa. The film was launched with little of what could properly be called "preproduction." Had they planned it, Jordan jokes, the film probably would not have been made. They expected production to last one year. But "it's always a lot bigger and longer than you expect," Ascher admits. "We could never have predicted it would take five years of our lives."

Over the next year and a half, the couple filmed the family's unfolding saga: the day-to-day business of losing a farm, the meetings over coffee to figure out how to keep it, evenings in front of the TV set maintaining a semblance of normality, their attempt to pay off a six-figure debt by auctioning all their farm equipment and heirloom furniture; the plan to turn the farm over to one of the sons, who had his own equipment and was being forced off a neighboring farm that he leased, the habits and quarrels and quiet affection of a Midwestern family.

"When we were shooting, we were pursuing lots of different possible threads," says Ascher. Following potential leads all over the farm burned up more film than anyone had planned. Up in their bedroom at night, Ascher recalls, "We would say, 'Okay, we can afford to shoot this much film on this trip,' then we'd be up in the room later, saying, 'We've blown through all the film, and we still have five more days to shoot! Are we going to call Kodak and put it on the credit card?'" Jordan smiles as she recalls how they had additional film shipped to Iowa every trip. "Usually three days later. Why we never figured that out about ourselves..."

This is the price of total access to their subject. It was also the result of the anxious feeling "that we didn't have any sequences, that nothing was happening," says Jordan, "or that we were going to miss some emotional moment." Further, her father, Russel Jordan, is a taciturn man. "One of the things that's powerful with him is the way you can read emotions into his silence. But when we were shooting him, we just saw silence and were worried," recalls Ascher.

"When we first looked at all the footage together," Ascher says, "we couldn't imagine how this could all be one movie." But it was a considerable time before they could do even that. Ascher and Jordan had nearly 30 hours of film. In the scheme

Roberto Quezada-Dardon



Jeanne Jordan's parents, Russ and Mary Jane, married in 1941



Jeanne Jordan (youngest) with her sisters.

of feature-length documentaries, 180 rolls of film is not exactly extravagant. But the filmmakers estimated that every 10 minutes of film costs about $350 by the time it's purchased, developed, printed, and readied for editing. Because of that, nothing was processed or seen for nearly two years. "Everything went into the freezer, right next to the chicken and vegetables," says Ascher.

In that two-year period, Jordan and Ascher were applying for grants, "over 30 of them and some more than once," says Ascher. Eventually their efforts paid off. Six private foundations and eight state humanities councils each gave them grants ranging from $5,000 to $15,000—enough to get the editing process rolling. (Part of the deal was that the film would be shown free of charge to community groups in each funding state. It's something the filmmakers wanted to do anyway, but they now estimate they're spending about $2,000 in each state to hold the screenings.)

These grants enabled them to pull together a work-in-progress for the 1994 Independent Feature Film Market (IFFM). Although IFFM gave Ascher and Jordan a little press (an observant European journalist from *Screen International* reported that it was likely Sundance material) and a much needed boost in morale, no investors bit. They went back to work on the film for nine more months. Then in the spring of 1994, a foreign sales agent, Louise Rosen, who knew Ascher from his past films, signed on to the film. She found them their first buyer: the BBC series *Fine Cut*.

Working on the film whenever they could, postproduction on *Troublesome Creek* would eventually take more than a year and a half. The film was cut by hand and without assistants on a Steenbeck. The filmmakers believe this was the most affordable way to do it. Although the initial cost can be high, since the process requires a workprint, "a film like this takes a really long time to edit," Ascher explains. "All the narration work was made possible because we had a lot of time to try things and think about it. We could do that because, once we had the Steenbeck in hand and our workprint, our costs really dropped to almost nothing. . . . It really takes the pressure off, because a nonlinear editing suite can go for thousands of dollars a month."

Since the digital revolution has driven the price of "low-tech" gear like flatbeds down to affordable levels, Ascher and Jordan found it reasonable to take half-share ownership in the Steenbeck they were using. A friend had offered to rent the couple a Steenbeck at a greatly reduced price. This soon became monthly payments towards half-ownership in the eight-plate, two-screen flatbed, which was paid off well before editing on the film was completed.

As the film evolved, certain decisions steeply escalated its cost. At first, they wanted no music or narration. But it became apparent that Jordan's point of view was the key to explaining what was happening on film. For instance, Jordan's parents liked to watch TV at night, especially old westerns. By organizing the film around these quiet pauses and adding narration that drew parallels between the movies, what her parents were

None of the film was processed or seen for nearly two years. "Everything went into the freezer, right next to the chicken and vegetables," says Ascher.

going through, and bits of family history, Jordan turned a potential liability into an asset—although, she notes, "when we were trying to get the rights to the films, it wasn't an asset!"

Licensing these rights took well over a year. The five 20-to-30 second clips used cost around $30,000, "and that's only because Steve negotiated so incredibly with the studios. Back and back and back and back," recalls Jordan. "All the rights are separate: the picture's one thing, the music's another thing, the actors are another thing." Ascher says they couldn't even get a studio to return a phone call until they were legitimized with a television contract—and then some studios wanted $16,000 for 20 seconds. "Filmmakers should think very hard before they put in clips," he cautions. "It's a long, painful process."

At the opposite end of the pain and pleasure scale was dealing with composer Sheldon Mirowitz. "I'd always had a tendency to feel like music was somehow dishonest or manipulative in documentaries," says Jordan. But the beginning of the film was "very complicated. It's economics—'snore'—it's a lot of farming—'who cares?'—and it's about my family—'so what?' " So it became important that the viewer know right away they were not in for 88 minutes of talking heads and sentimental narration.

Mirowitz's music helped establish this, especially in the first few minutes. "When Sheldon went to work on it, interweaving a mandolin with 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' theme and [music from] classical Westerns" says Ascher, "it really enlivened the beginning." Working from the filmmakers' notes and a locked version of the film, it took Mirowitz only three weeks to compose the score and two days to record it. Nearly everything he created was used in the film, but this increased the cost of the project by $15,000.


The Jordans on their farm.

As Jordan and Ascher tried to figure out how to pay for this and their other mounting expenses, the clouds parted and a year's worth of efforts to show *Troublesome Creek* to WGBH finally came to fruition. The PBS affiliate acquired the film for their *American Experience* series. Although the filmmakers would not reveal how much they received from WGBH, *American Experience* coproduction deals can mean sums upwards of $100,000, and according to Ascher, the signed contract for "more than the typical *American Experience* program." Although this did not cover all the expenses, the film could now be completed and plans made for another IFFM showing.

The 1995 IFFM yielded mainly good word of mouth. The only distributor nibble came from Sande Zeig, head of Artistic License, who liked the film and expressed a desire to raise funds in order to be able to distribute it. Her sincerity meant a lot to the pair, but there was no commitment on anybody's part. The filmmakers' sights were set on the next goal: Sundance 1996.

Troublesome Creek had been accepted to the premiere American film festival on the basis of a videotape. Now the filmmakers had to face the financial decision of whether to present the film in 16mm or 35mm.

The filmmakers went to DuArt and picked the door that said 35mm. Since they hadn't received any money yet from the broadcasting agreements, more money had to be borrowed for the blow up. Jordan and Ascher got a 35mm internegative not from a 35mm interpositive blow up—the usual process, with the interpositive blown up from 16mm A and B rolls—but from a 16mm interpositive instead (so it's the 35mm internegative that is blown up, eliminating the need for a 35mm interpositive). If the negative has been properly exposed and handled, the difference in image quality is very slight. To Ascher's credit as a cinematographer, Jordan says, "*Variety* praised the film's 35mm photography." She adds, "This is the kind of thing that DuArt loves to hear." Independent filmmakers ought to love this too: Ascher and Jordan spent only $20,000 this way, saving $10,000.

The couple are still rather bemused by what took place at Sundance. "It was this bundle of contradictions," Ascher relates. "We had four incredible screenings—this exhilarating experience of sitting in the back of the theater and watching the film (now blown up to 35 for the first time) with audiences that just completely got it. They were laughing where we hoped they'd laugh, they were silent where we hoped they'd be paying attention, people were crying—all these reactions we hoped for in the editing room.

"But on the business side of things, there was virtually no distributor interest. At one point, we looked at each other and said, 'Well, if all we get out of this is that we know it can play to an audience, so be it.' And then everything changed on awards night. We won, and suddenly we had all sorts of new best friends."

But more was to come. "You have Sundance, then this flurry of interest, then two weeks later they announce the Academy Award nominations. Some distributors called who were waiting to see if we got nominated. So then there's this other flurry of interest.

"And then there's this one day in February—where in *one day*—ten distributors that had been very interested all said, 'Well, we don't think so.' "

Ascher laughs when he relates this, and Jordan adds, "Basically, the big distributors that were interested initially were interested because it was Sundance, because it was the Academy Awards. But the truth of the matter is that most of them don't know what to do with documentaries, and don't *do* documentaries. When you look at who really distributes documentaries, it's a small list."

Another factor working against them was the presale to PBS. Theatrical distributors want to hedge their bets by having a TV deal to fall back on. "People were taken aback when they found out those rights weren't available," says Jordan, "but we had nowhere to borrow that money from, and we really needed it to finish the film. This way we got it, we finished the film with it, and we got a wonderful slot on PBS."

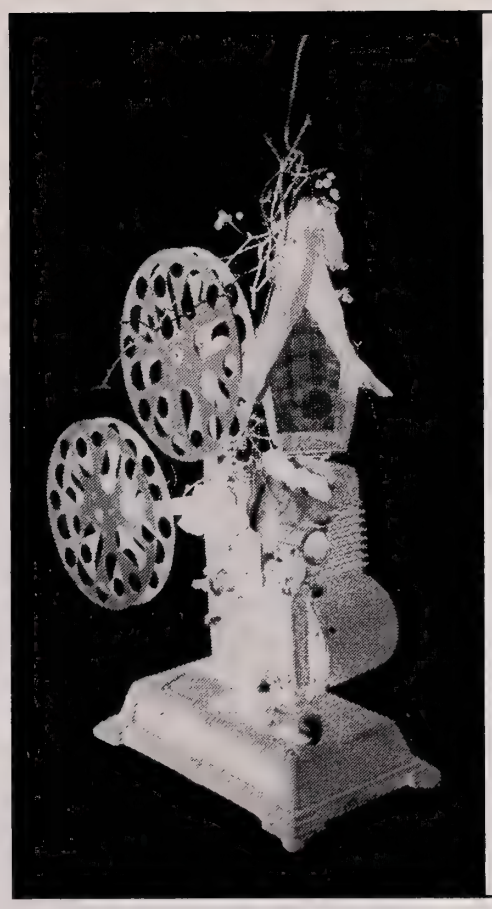
Ascher notes, "Had we gone with a theatrical distributor that claimed those TV rights, we would only get a percentage of that money. This way we were able to get it all." Jordan adds, "In some ways, going with a big distributor is more a matter of prestige than money."

The main reason they have no regrets about not going with a major distributor is that, ever since meeting Sande Zeig at IFFM, hers was the company they most wanted to work with. When she had first expressed interest, however, Artistic License had other films in release and was not budgeted for prints and advertising on any more films that year. "But during the time all of this evolved," Ascher says, "she teamed up with Forensic Films and created a situation where they could release our film."

At press-time, Artistic License plans a platform release beginning in late January. Its broadcast will follow in early 1997.

Do Jordan and Ascher think five years is too long to have spent on a small personal film? Looking back, they realize there was no other way. "It's amazing how many personal documentaries like this do take five years," says Ascher. "Michel Negroponte, Ross McElwee, Robb Moss—all of our friends who do similar kinds of films agree that five years seems pretty typical."

Roberto Quezada-Dardon is a journalist transplanted from Los Angeles, now freezing in Manhattan.



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BY COURTNEY PORTER

Men, misery, murder, and music. . . no, it's not an after-school special; it's **Highway of Heartache** (86 min., 16 mm), a wild new camp comedy by Gregory Wild. Wynona-Sue Turnpike, a "classic right-wing victim," sets out on a journey to find international fame and fortune. Her optimism and undying love for God, as well as her talents with a heartbreak country song, give her the faith she needs to survive the trip. Featuring eye-popping drag and a great soundtrack, this musical melodrama is not to be missed. *Highway of Heartache,* Scorn-a-Rama Pictures, Outsider Enterprises, 2940 16th St., #200-1, San Francisco, CA 94103; tel/fax: (415) 863-0611.

Did you know that Jerry Seinfeld, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Jason Alexander, Michael Richards, and Conan O'Brien are breaking into the indie scene? In **Good Money** (82 min., 16mm), writer/director Jeremiah Bosgang brings these celebs together in a comic and autobiographical account of his experiences from rags in New York to TV-exec riches in Hollywood, and back to rags in New York. Many of the people from Bosgang's life play themselves in the film, recreating events that actually happened. *Good Money* began as a series of autobiographical monologues that were adapted from stage to screen. *Good Money,* The Phquad Group, 698 West End Avenue, Apt. 6-D, NY, NY 10025; (212) 222-8151; fax 222-2570.

True love or a lifetime of adventure? That's the dilemma 22 year-old Julia Bradshaw faces in **Love Always** (90 min., 35 mm), a film by Jude Pauline Eberhard. Julia, an unsuccessful actress in San Diego, accepts her boyfriend Mark's marriage proposal, and joins him in Spokane. The trip to Spokane takes longer than expected, as Julia winds up making a detour to Nevada to pick up a ceramic cow, attends her best friend's wedding as the maid of honor, rides in a van to Boston with her favorite band (the Virgin Sluts), and eventually encounters romance on the open road. Once in Spokane, will she be able to abandon her unpredictable life for predictable Mark? *Love Always,* CineWest, 700 Adella Ln., Coronado, CA 92118; (619) 435-5520; fax: 435-0691.

You knew it wouldn't be long before they started making films about Internet romances, and here it is. **Heart to Heart.Com** (90 min., 35 mm) is a romantic comedy about Meg, who faces the possibility of losing her house if she doesn't get married within six months. Since there is no chance of meeting a respectable guy the old-fashioned way, the Internet makes its entrance as matchmaker. Will Meg have more success than the rest of us? *Heart to Heart.Com,* Fortress Films, 580 Broadway, 11th fl., NY, NY 10012; (212) 226-6258.


From Gregory Wild's country-western drag musical, *Highway of Heartache.*
Courtesy Outsider Enterprises

In keeping with the *amour* trend, **Unconditional Love** (12 min., video), tells the story of Barbara Hues and her daughter, Toni. After attempting to prevent crack dealers from taking over her neighborhood in Harlem, Barbara Hues' building was set on fire by drug dealers, and she lost her daughter in the fire.. While homeless in New York, Barabara learns that love extends beyond the boundaries of life and discovers that she will never be alone. *Unconditional Love,* Rachel D. James, 335 East 111 St., #2M, NY, NY 10029; (212) 289-4580.

"The movie shakes, wiggles, and jumps across the screen like an MTV-smoking crackhead's dream." Even if you have no idea what an MTV-smoking crackhead is, you might be interested in VJ Art Jones' first feature-length narrative, **My Generation X** (75 min., 16mm). It's an intense, darkly comic portrait of a group of early nineties urban dwellers struggling with self-identity and "reality" as they move through New York City's over-saturated media landscape. The film follows the struggles of Nadirah Ali, a Brooklyn video artist, as he makes a documentary about the effect of the sixties' social upheavals on the "X Generation." The random characters she interviews and encounters on the city streets affect each other in various ways. *My Generation X,* Box 357, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276; (212) 252-2118; artjones@earthlink.net.

Jackie is on the run with two kids in tow, escaping from a husband who'd rather see her dead than gone. At the bottom of the unforgiving barrel of poverty and friendlessness, Jackie initiates a 24-hour crime **Spree** (88 min, Super 16mm) in order to pay her way out of desperate living. Prison, lost custody, and a climactic showdown with the vicious hubby all follow in 14-year documentary veteran Rustin Thompson's first narrative feature. *Spree,* Nick Productions, Inc., 5454 57th Ave. South, Seattle, WA 948118; (206) 723-8228; fax: 725-6988.

Courtney Porter is a former editorial assistant at The Independent.

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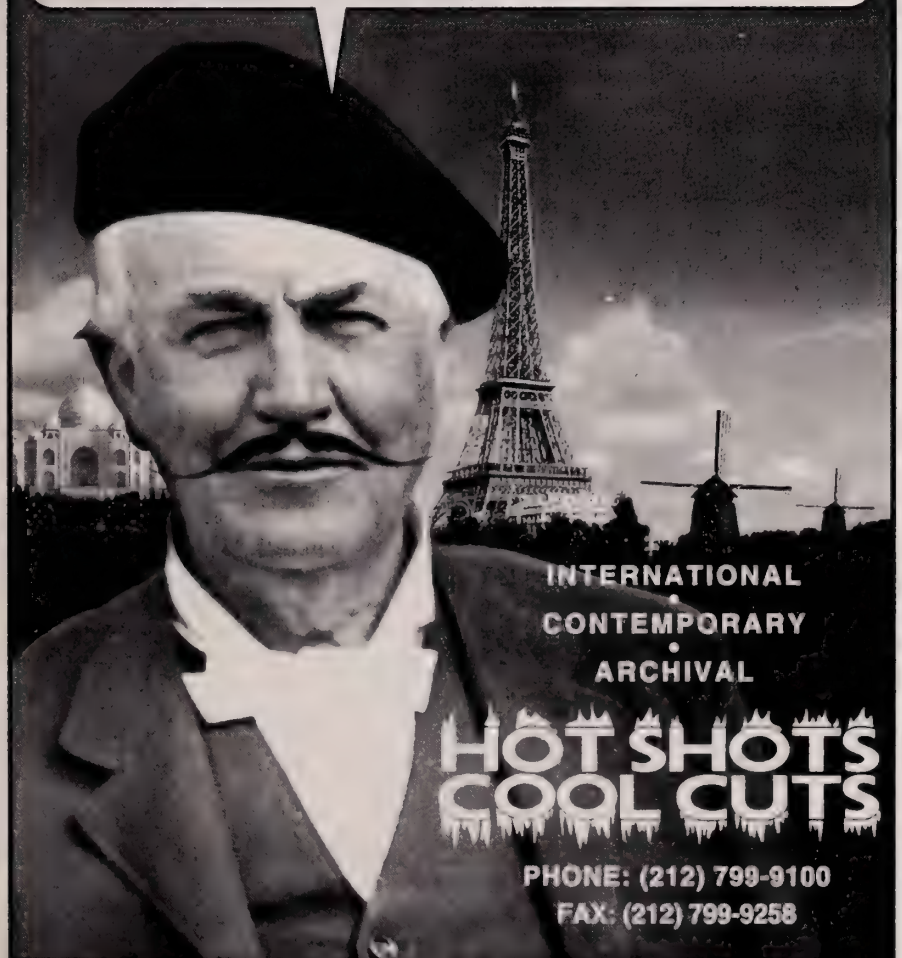
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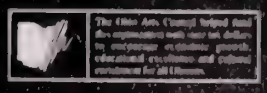
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GEORGE FOSTER PEABODY AWARDS, May, NY. Estab. in '40, awards recognize "distinguished achievement & meritorious public service" by domestic & int'l radio & TV nets, stations, producing orgs, cable TV orgs & individuals. Awards administered by Henry W. Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication of Univ. of Georgia. Selections made by Nat'l Advisory Board. Competition also open to entries produced for alternative distribution, incl. corporate, educational & home video release; those intended for theatrical release ineligible. Award cats: News; Entertainment; Programs for Children; Education; Doc; Public Service; & Individuals, Institutions or Organizations. All program entries must be for programs broadcast, cablecast or released for nonbroadcast distribution during calendar yr preceding jurying process. All entries become permanent part of Peabody Collection, one of nation's oldest & largest moving image archives; entry materials not returned. Formats accepted: Beta SP, 3/4", 1/2" (for judging). Entry fee: $125. Deadline: Mid Jan. Contact: Director, George Foster Peabody Awards, College of Journalism & Mass Communications, Sanford Dr. at Baldwin St., Univ. of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602-3018; (706) 542-3787; fax: 542-9273; peabody@uga.cc.uga.edu.; http://www.peabody.uga .edu.

HUMBOLDT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March, Ca. Now celebrating its 30th yr, this is oldest student-run fest in US. All cats of 16mm & super-8 films under 60 min. accepted for juried competition by active ind. filmmakers. This yr fest continues to feature experimental, animated, doc & narrative films. Int'l entries encouraged. Approx. $2000 in cash & prizes awarded. Entries must have been produced in last 3 yrs. Sliding scale entry fee for films (US $20-35; int'l $25-40). Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Humboldt Int'l Film Festival, Theater Arts Dept., Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 826-4113; fax: 826-5494; filmfest@ axe.humboldt.edu; http://sorrel.humboldt.edu/~theatre/filmfest.html.

LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May, CA. Estab. in '85 by Visual Communications, nation's oldest Asian Pacific American media arts center & UCLA Film & TV Archive, fest has grown into major showcase highlighting cinematic & video expression by Asian Pacific American & Asian int'l mediamakers. Previous fests have programmed over 120 works, w/ diverse program providing audiences a chance to view important achievements by estab. & emerging mediamakers. Features & shorts eligible in cats: dramatic/narrative, docs, experimental, animation/ graphic films & 1-channel videos in all genres. Works must be by Asian & Pacific Americans w/ themes involving but not limited to Asian Pacific American culture, history & experiences. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $10 for return shipping. Deadline: Jan. 17. Contact: Abraham Ferrer, Visual Communications, 23 So. Los Angeles St., Ste. 307, Los Angeles, CA 90012; (213) 680-4462; fax: 687-4848.

LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Apr. 3-7, CA. Now in 3rd yr., fest showcases best in ind. film from around country. Full-length feature films, shorts & docs completed after 1/95 accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 10. Contact: Robert Faust, Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, 650 N. Bronson Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90004; (213) 937-9137; fax: 851-7337; http://www.laiff.com.

***METROPOLITAN FILM FESTIVAL**, February, MI. Noncompetitive showcase, estab. in 1991, for ind. film/videomakers. Looking for "spirited ind. work by visionary filmmakers" & jurying criteria "relies heavily on subject matter, style & filmmakers' vision; budget & production are always secondary considerations." Fest sponsored by Independent Film Channel & Detroit Filmmakers Coalition. Shown in 4 venues, fest accepts shorts, docs & features; about 50 works each yr. Extensive local press coverage. Entries should be under 60 min. & not previously shown or submitted to fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8, 8mm. Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Gus Calandrino, fest dir., Metropolitan Film Festival, 17336 Harper Ave, Ste. 52, Detroit, MI 48224; (313) 417-5426.

N.A.P. VIDEO FESTIVAL, Spring, PA. Presented by New Arts Program in collaboration w/ Art Gallery at Lafayette College, which presents cutting-edge videomakers. Videomakers invited to

enter competition in narrative, experimental & doc cats. Cash awards & public screenings in 4 metropolitan areas, incl. Philadelphia & NYC. Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Dec. 16. Contact: NAP Video Festival '97, Box 0082, Kutztown, PA 19530-0082; (610) 683-6440 (ph/fax).

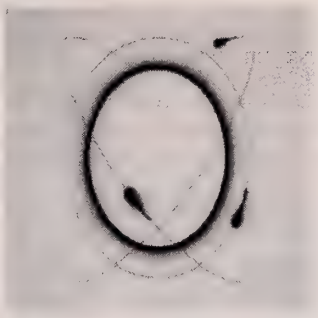
NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS, March 21-April 6, NY. Highly regarded noncompetitive series presented by Film Society of Lincoln Center & Museum of Modern Art. Founded in '72, fest presents average of 23 features & 15 shorts each yr at MoMA. About 900 entries submitted. No cats; all genres & lengths considered. Shorts presented w/ features. Films generally shown twice; however, docs may be shown only once. Films selected by 3 programmers at Film Society & 3 curators from museum. Fest is well publicized; all programs reviewed in *New York Times* & *Village Voice*. Generally sells out (attendance averages 93% & estimated at 25,000). Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & be NY premieres with no prior public exhibition. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Jan 17. Send SASE for entry form or download from www.filmline.com starting in November. Contact: Isa Cucinotta, film coordinator, New Directors/New Films, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York NY 10023-6595; (212) 875-5610; fax: 875-5636.

NEW YORK LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL—THE NEW FESTIVAL, June, NY. Fest, "committed to presenting diverse & culturally inclusive programs of film, video & new digital media," showcases all genres of film & video of any length by, for, or about gay men, lesbians, bisexual or transgendered people, incl. dramatic features & shorts, docs & experimental works. Submissions of digital media accepted (including QuickTime video & interactive media). Committed to presenting diverse & culturally inclusive programs of film & video. Works-in-progress considered if they will be completed by May 1997. Fest also accepting proposals for lecture & film clip presentations, curated film/video programs & interactive media installations. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", CD-ROM; preview on 1/2", CD-ROM. Entry fee: None for works postmarked on or before 12/27; $15 after. Deadline: Feb. 3. Contact: The New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, 47 Great Jones St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 254-7228; fax: 254-8655; newfest@gramercyios.com.

RETIREMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION NATIONAL MEDIA OWL AWARDS, May 14, IL. Competitive fest for outstanding films, video & TV series that "address aging issues, capture images of older persons & illuminate challenge & promise of an aging society." Entries must deal w/ concerns of older persons or those working in aging field. Cats: ind. films, TV nonfiction, training/educational films, community videos. Awards: 1st Prize: $5000, bronze statuette; 2nd Prize: $2000 & plaque; Honorable Mentions: $1000 & plaques; Community Video Award: $2000 & statuette. Entries must have been produced in US & released or initially copyrighted during 1996. Formats: 3/4", VHS, 16mm video transfers. No entry fee. Deadline: Feb. 5. Contact: Ray Bradford, project dir., National Media Owl Awards,, Retirement Research Foundation, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Ste. 401, Chicago, IL 60631-4170; (773) 714-

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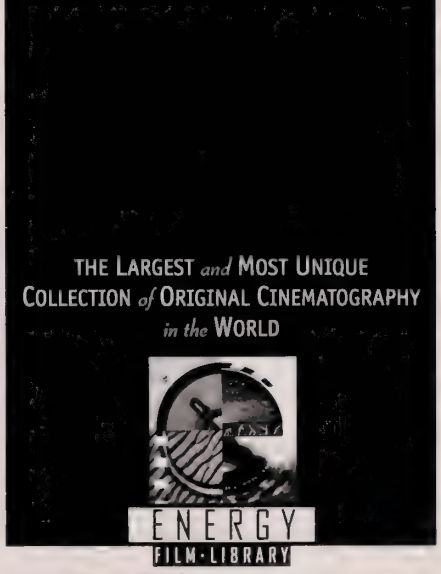
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ROSEBUD COMPETITION, April, DC. Rosebud is all-volunteer org. formed in '90 to promote ind. film & video in Washington, DC area. Goal is to honor "innovative, experimental, unusual or deeply personal in creative filmmaking." Competition accepts works completed or first released since Jan. of preceding 2 yrs; eligible entrants are producers or directors who are current residents of DC, MD, or VA. Works accepted in all cats, incl. narrative, doc, art/experimental, music video & animation; works-in-progress/trailers/promos welcome if they stand on their own. 20 nominees & 5 winners incl. Best of Show, chosen by panel of film & video professionals. Cash & equipment/supplies prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Late Jan. Contact: Natasha Reatig, exec. dir., Rosebud Competition, Box 21309, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 797-9081; rosebudwdc@aol.com; http://members.aol.com/rosebudwdc.

SAN JOSE STATE VISUAL ARTISTS FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, April, CA. Founded in '90, this 2-day fest accepts all works about student issues which are controversial, cutting edge, outside entertainment mainstream, politically incorrect & beyond. Events incl. screenings, music & seminars. Formats accepted: 1/2". Entry fee: $15. Deadline: late Jan. Contact: Kerstin Becker, films dir., San Jose State Visual Artists Film & Video Festival, Associated Students Program Board, San Jose State University, Student Union Rm. 350, San Jose, CA 95192-0132; (408) 924-6260; fax: 924-6239.

SIERRA CLUB FILM FESTIVAL, April, NY. Debuting this yr, fest is presented by NYC Sierra Club. Goals are "to instill in audiences a heightened sensitivity to nature, raise awareness about the interconnectedness of all life on Earth & motivate people to think about & act on behalf of the environment." Limited number of films chosen so that all films & issues they raise receive attention. Some filmmakers invited to participate in Q&A sessions or panel discussions. Shorts, feature, fiction or doc, children's & animated accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Greg Casini, Sierra Club Film Festival, 330 Third Ave., #9H, New York, NY 10010; (212) 684-0053; fax: 481-9761; gcasini@phri.nyu.edu.

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FILM FESTIVAL (SXSW), Mar. 7-15, TX. Regional & ind. film & video showcases approx. 150 works, incl. shorts, for audiences estimated at 20,000 over 9 days. Entries must have been completed in 1996. Works completed prior to 1996 will be considered for showcasing outside competition. Awards: Best Narrative Feature, Best Doc Feature, Best Narrative Short, Best Doc Short, Best Music Video. SXSW Film Conference kicks off fest, featuring 2 days of panel discussions on aspects of filmmaking geared toward working film & videomakers as well as screenwriters, aspiring professionals & movie aficionados. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $15 ($20 w/ return of video). Deadline: Dec. 13. Contact: Nancy Shafer, exec. producer, SXSW Film, Box 4999, Austin, TX 78765; (512) 467-7979; fax: 451-0754; 72662.2465@compuserve.com; http://sxsw.com/sxsw/.

STUDENT VIDEO FESTIVAL, March-May, NY. Founded in '88, fest organized entirely by & for students. All tapes reviewed by peer committees of students of time-based media. Fest seeks wide variety of interesting & challenging work that demonstrates concerns of students of all ages. All genres & subjects welcome; works must be completed w/in previous 2 yrs & no more than 29 min. Selected tapes incl. in 6 wk exhibit in Visual Studies Workshop Gallery & cablecast on RCTV public access. Fest also becomes part of extensive archives of Visual Studies Workshop Galleries traveling exhibitions program. About 20 works selected each yr for audiences of over 400. Entry fee: None (return postage necessary). Deadline: Mid March. Contact: Media Center Coordinator, Student Video Festival, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607-1499; (716) 442-8676; fax: 442-1992.

TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL, Apr. 10-13, NM. Estab as artists' colony over 100 yrs ago, Taos is known for eclectic mixture of cultures, traditions & philosophies. In this context fest organizers program over 100 ind. features, docs, videos & shorts during 4 day fest. Highlights incl. Tributes; Open Sheet screenings (come-one-come-all showcase for emerging filmmakers); Hispanic & Native American programs, as well as comprehensive Media Literacy Forum that offers attendees panel discussions, workshops & demonstrations focusing on state of media. Innovation Award of 5 acres of land to be awarded to narrative, doc or experimental film, 70 min. or longer,

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AIVF helps you save time and money as well. You'll find you can spend more of your time (and less of your money) on what you do best—getting your work made and seen. To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 5,000 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed.

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Here's what membership offers:

THE INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including media education and the new technologies.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A range of health insurance options are available, as well as special liability, E&O, and production plans tailored for the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

A growing list of businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. In New York, members receive discounted rates at two hotels to make attendance at our programs and other important events more convenient.

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country; call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

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that takes fresh approach to storytelling &/or cinematic medium. Entries should have been completed w/in 19 mos. of fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video; preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15-$25. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Kelly Clement, events dir., Taos Talking Pictures, 216M North Pueblo Road, #216, Taos, NM; (505) 751-0637; fax: 751-7385; ttpix@taos-net.com; http://www. taosnet.com/ttpix.

THAW 97: A FESTIVAL OF FILM, VIDEO AND DIGITAL MEDIA, May, IA. Alternative fest run by media artists to "acknowledge creative & artistic expressions of the motion image." Held at University of Iowa. Personal visions by independent producers, "especially those which challenge conventional standards through experimentation in form & content" accepted. No content restrictions. Awards given based upon merits of work submitted. Media artists & critics select best work in each cat for cash prizes. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1994. Formats: 1/2"; digital media submissions on CD-ROM or self extracting archives on MacIntosh disk. Entry fee: $15 (under 30 min); $25 (over 30 min). Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: Renee Sueppel, University of Iowa, Intermedia & Video Art, 6 Int'l Center, Iowa City, IA 52242-1802; (319) 354-0430, -5402; fax: 335-1774; thaw97@uiowa.edu; http://www.uiow.edu/~interart.

UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Feb. 7-8, NJ. Fest is open to any genre (animation, doc, experimental, fiction, personal, narrative, etc.) but work must have been predominantly shot on super 8/8mm film or Hi8/8mm video. Judges award $1200 in cash & prizes. Last yr's fest attracted SRO audience which viewed 13 prize-winning works out of 132 entries from US & Canada. Rutgers Film Co-op has sponsored 4 touring programs from past fest prize winners, screened at media art centers, film fests & universities incl. 2nd World Fest of Video in Brussels, Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, 911 Media Arts Center in Seattle, Boston School of Museum of Fine Arts, Hallwalls in Buffalo, Melbourne Super 8 Festival, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Northwest Film & Video Center/Portland Art Museum, & others. Entry fee: $30. Contact: Fest Director, 1997 United States Super 8 Film/Video Festival, Rutgers Film Co-op, New Jersey Media Arts Center, Program in Cinema Studies, 108 Ruth Adams Bldg-Douglass Campus, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903; (908) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; NJMAC@aol.com.

WINDY CITY INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL, May 2-8, Chicago. Cosponsored by Columbia College Chicago and the Int'l Documentary Association, festival brings the world's finest docs to Chicago and actively pursues broadcast outlets for festival films. Screenings include selections by Festival Jury and invited documentaries. Independent and student entries encouraged. Films not in English must have English subtitles. Preview formats: 1/2" (NTSC, PAL, or SECAM), non-returnable; exhibition formats: Beta, 3/4", Hi8; 1/2" video any standard; 16mm. Entry fee $25; IDA members $20; students $15 or $10 if IDA member. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: (312) 663-1600 x 5773.

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HIROSHIMA INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, Japan. Launched in 1975, this fest was estab to commemorate 30th anniversary of bombing of Hiroshima; its theme is "the pursuit of peace & a reverence for life." All entries must be by amateurs (individuals or groups) & relate to fest theme. No regulations regarding style or genre. Running time must not exceed 20 min.; silent & sound accepted. All works must have been produced since 1991. Awards (in 16mm, 8mm & video cats): Foreign Minister's Prize, Education Minister's Prize, Hiroshima City Mayor's Prize (Statuette, Citation, ¥500,000), President of Chugoku Broadcasting Co. Prize (Statuette, Citation, ¥250,000), Hiroshima Prefecture Governor's Prize, Nagasaki City Mayor's Prize, Hiroshima City Board of Education Prize (to students in high school, colleges, universities or other academic institutions), President of Japan Foundation Prize, President of National Federation of UNESCO Association in Japan Prize, Chugoku Shimbun Co. Prize, Asahi Shimbun Co. Prize, Mainichi Shimbun Co. Prize, Judges Encouragement Prize, Asia Prize, Honorable Mention (10). Award winning works shown on television & shown at sister festival EarthPeace in Burlington, VT. Formats: 16mm, 8mm, video. Enclose return postage by IRC. Deadline: Feb. 28. Contact: Secretariat, Hiroshima Int'l Amateur Film & Video Festival, c/o Chugoku Broadcasting Co., Dept. of Business Promotion, External Enterprise Division, 21-3 Motomachi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima, 730 Japan; 011 82 222-1133; fax: 011 82 222-1319.

HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Mar. 25-Apr. 9, Hong Kong. Fest is now in 21st yr. Noncompetitive event organized by Urban Council of Hong Kong aims to serve as platform for int'l film exchange window to world for Hong Kong Cinema. Program incl Int'l Cinema (70-80 new features); Asian Cinema (40-50 new features); Hong Kong Panorama 96/97 (8-12 films) & Hong Kong Retrospective Cinema (this yr's topic is "50 Years of Electrifying Shadows: Looking Back & Looking Ahead," incl. 40 films & series of conferences on development of Hong Kong film industry during past 50 yrs, w/ film scholars, researchers & film professionals invited as speakers). Films must not have been shown in Hong Kong prior to fest screenings. Program incl features, shorts, docs & animated films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Early Dec. Contact: Senior Manager, Hong Kong Int'l Film Festival, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Level 7, Administration Bldg., 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong; tel: 011 852 2734 2899; fax: 011 852 2366 5206; http://www.UC.gov.hi/hkiff.

SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April, Singapore. FIAPF-recognized invitational fest for features, shorts, docs & animation celebrates its 10th yr in 1997. Offers noncompetitive & competitive section for Asian cinema, w/ award for best Asian feature. Open to features completed after Jan. 1 of preceding yr. Entries must be Singapore premieres. About 120 features shown each yr, along w/ 60 shorts & videos from 35 countries. Main section shows 35mm; all other formats accepted in fringe programs. Several US ind films have been featured in past editions. Also Children's/Young Adults Section. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: None. Deadline: Mid Jan Contact: Philip Cheah, fest dir., Singapore Int'l Film Festival, 29A Keong Saik Rd., Singapore 089136; tel: 011 65 738 7567; fax: 011 65 738 7578; filmfest@pacific.net.sg; http://www.pacific.net.sg/siff.

TAMPERE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Mar. 5-9, Finland. Leading int'l short film fest, this FIAPF-recognized competitive event is now in its 27th year. Latests in Finnish & int'l productions & selected films from earlier yrs for audiences of over 40,000, w/ over 200 int'l guests & large group from Finnish film industry & press. Over 400 films from 40 countries showcased. 3 cats in int'l competition (100 films): animated films, docs & fiction. Running time may not exceed 30 min. & films must have had first public screening on or after Jan. 1 of 1995. Educational, industrial, advertising & tourist films not accepted. Awards: Grand Prix: statuette "Kiss" & 25,000 FIM (about $4,545); Cat Prizes: "Kiss" & 4,000 FIM (about $730) for best film in each cat; Special Prize of Jury: "Kiss" & 4,000 FIM ($730); Diplomas of Merit. About 20 thematic programs. There is also film market (w/ over 1,300 shorts), seminars (specializing this year on Baltic & Eastern European productions), open discussions & screenings for children. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. Entry fee: None. Deadline: Jan 5. Contact: Pertti Paltila, fest dir., Tampere Int'l Short Film Festival, Box 305, FI-33101 Tampere, Finland; tel: 011 358 3 213 0034; fax: 011 358 3 223 0121; film.festival@tt.tampere.fi; http://www.tampere.fi/festival/film.

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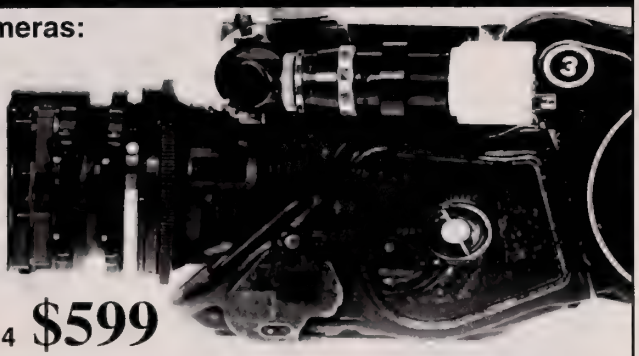
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Competitions

ATHENA AWARDS FOR LESBIAN EXCELLENCE IN FILM, the Latham Foundation's "Search of Excellence" Video Competition seeks videos completed and released btwn Jan. 1, 1990 & Dec. 31, 1996. Winners receive nat'l & local media attention, awards & publicity in a special issue of *Latham Letter*. For entry forms, send SASE to: Latham Foundation, Attn: Video Awards, Latham Plaza Building, Clement & Schiller Streets, Alameda, CA 94501; (510) 521-0920

HIP FLICK'S SCREENWRITING COMPETITION accepting entries through Jan. 31 Entrants notified by Mar. 31. Top 10 scripts receive cash awards. Winners eligible for possible production &/or option deal w/ company. Entry fee: $30. SASE to: Hip Flicks, Box 8867, Atlanta, GA 30306-0867; (770) 418-1293; hipflix@atl.mindspring.com; www.mindspring.com/hipflix.

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION announces 1997 screenwriting competition. $1,500 top prize. Contest open to writers who haven't yet earned money writing for TV or film. Submit 90-130 pg film or TV scripts. Entry fee: $40/script, multiple submits accepted. Deadline: Jan 10. Send SASE to: MCFCSC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942-0111; (408) 646-0910.

NATIONAL WRITERS WORKSHOP SCREENPLAY CONTESTS incl. Ethnic Minority Contest for minorities only & National Screenplay Contest, open to all. Winners receive $500. Deadline: Dec. 31. For info, send SASE to: NWW, Box 36E79, LA, CA 90036, or call (213) 933-9232.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center is accepting applications. Send resume, project description indicating how image processing is integrated into the work, and videotape of recently completed work by Dec 15 to ETC, 109 Lower Fairfield Road, Newark Valley, New York 13811.

SCREENWRITING COMPETITION sponsored by Scorpio Pictures seeks innovative, commercial scripts for film/TV. All genres. $500 cash prize with potential production options. $35 entry fee. Deadline: Jan. 15. For rules, send SASE to: Scorpio Pictures, Box 1231, Sykesville, MD 21784-1231.

SET IN PHILADELPHIA 5th annual screenwriting competition accepting submissions nationally—feature-length screenplays set primarily in Greater Philadelphia Area. $5,000 prize, plus $1,000 to an outstanding writer under 30. All genres; deadline Jan. 10. For info: PFWC/Screenwriting Competition, 3701 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6593.

WRITERS WORKSHOP NATIONAL SCRIPTWRITING CONTEST accepting scripts. 5 to 6 winners will be chosen to receive $500 award. Winners also receive free tuition for critical evaluation of scripts before panel of motion picture agents, producers, writers & directors. Deadline: Ongoing. For submission info, send legal size SASE w/ 60¢ postage to: Willard Rogers, Writers Workshop Nat'l Contest, Box 69799, LA, CA 90069; (213) 933-9232.

Conferences • Workshops

BOSTON FILM AND VIDEO FOUNDATION offers workshops, lectures, and seminars. For complete schedule, contact Felicia Sullivan, Education Director at (617) 536-1540; fax 536-3576.

IFFCON '97 OPEN DAY: 4th Int'l Film Financing Conference announces Open Day, Jan. 10. 1997. Full day of panels & networking opportunities w/ key int'l film financiers & buyers. This is only day of IFFCON w/ open registration. Registr. fee: $125. Info/ registration: (415) 281-9777

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation and Tax Exemption" & more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

Films • Tapes Wanted

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX, ind. producer offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in series of 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172, wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia & Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to: PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For info contact: Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BURLE AVANT curating "530 Lines of Resolution," digital video art night at Den of Thieves on Lower East Side in NYC. Video artists encouraged to submit works; no entry fees required. Send NTSC VHS tapes under 15 min. by UPS or hand deliver to: 530 Lines of Resolution, c/o The Outpost, 118 North 11 St., 4th fl, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 599-2385

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS travelling exhibition and illustrated critical anthology about racial and sexual indeterminacy, fall 1999. Send slides, abstracts, resume or cv and SASE to Erin Valentino, Dept. of Art and Art History, University of Connecticut, 875 Coventry Road U-99, Storrs, CT 06269; (860) 486-3930; fax 486-3869; evalentino@finearts.sfa.uconn.edu

CHARISMATIC MASS TELEVISION seeks media art shorts for new monthly screening series. All genres accepted, any length. Ongoing deadline. Send artist statement, videotape & SASE. 3/4" preferred, Hi8 or 1/2" OK; returnable w/ SASE. Syracuse University, Art Media Studies, attn: Justine Wood, 102 Shaffer Art Bldg., Syracuse, NY 13244.

CUCALORUS FILM FEST seeks indie works of varying lengths and genres. Super 8, 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", Beta and SVHS video. Preview copies on VHS only. $10 entry fee before Feb 15, $15 for entries before March 1. P.O. Box 2763, Wilmington, NC 28402; (910) 815-3818.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for *Spirit of Dance*, live 1-hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DUTV-CABLE 54, progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by ind. producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment; will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Mongelli, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chesnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

FILMMAKERS UNITED, nonprofit org., presents monthly film series at Silent Movie Theatre in Los Angeles. Year-round venue for ind. short

films. To submit a film (must have 16mm or 35 mm print for screening & be no longer than 40 min.,) send a 1/2" video copy w/ SASE to: Filmmakers United, 1260 N. Alexandria Ave., LA, CA 90029; (213) 427-8016.

FROG PRODUCTIONS seeks student/ind. fims & videos for cable access TV show. Any length/genre, VHS preferred, 1/2" or 3/4" acceptable. Include info about work/artist, SASE if return desired. Fred W. DeVecca, Frog Prods, Box 158, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.

GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for *Living with AIDS*, half-hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, *Living with AIDS* Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

HANDI-CAPABLE IN THE MEDIA seeks videos of any length about people with disabilities. Programs will air on Atlanta's Cable 12. No fees, however credit & exposure to large viewing audience. VHS preferred, S-VHS, 3/4" acceptable. Sharon Douglas, Handi-Capable in the Media, Inc., 2625 Piedmont Rd., Suite 56-137, Atlanta, GA 30324.

IN SHORT, a 1/2-hr program that airs bi-monthly, seeks submissions for public access show in NY. Preference given to works created w/ digital video. On every 4th program, work produced by or featuring women highlighted. Works up to 28 min., submitted on VHS for preview, available in 3/4". Send sub. to: In Short, 240 East 27th St., Suite 17N, NY, NY 10016; (212) 689-0505.

IN THE MIX, nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8 min.) videos produced by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone # to: *In the Mix*, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

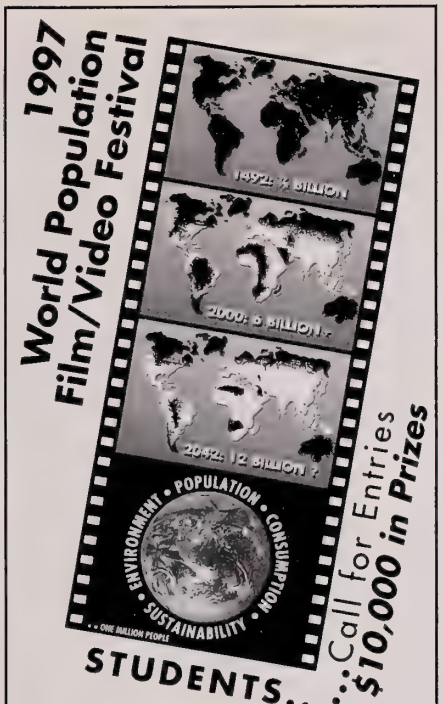
IND. FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, cable access show seeks student & ind. films & videos to give exposure. Send 3/4" format w/ paragraph about artist & work. The Independent Film & Video Showcase, 6755 Yucca St., #8, Hollywood, CA 90028, attn: Jerry Salata.

INDEPENDENT EXPOSURE, monthly screening program seeks experimental, avant-garde, doc, narrative. Possible monetary renumeration. Submit your films and/or videos on 1/2" or 8mm video. Clearly label tapes with title, length, name, address & phone. Include SASE if you wish tapes returned. Contact: Blackchair Prod., 2318 Second Ave., #313A Seattle, WA 98121; (206) 282-3592; joel@ speakeasy.org.

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Joanna Spitzner, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include self-addressed envelope w/ sufficient postage.

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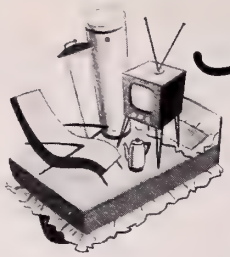
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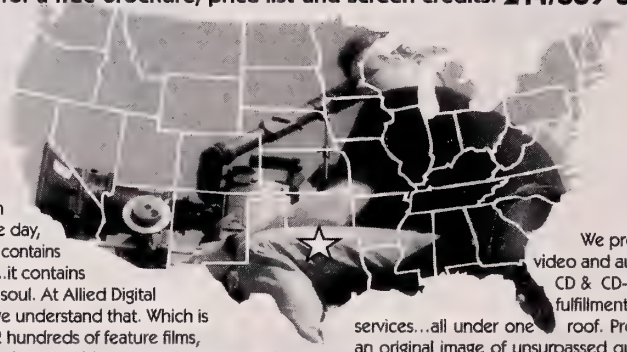
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FROM THE U.S.A. Looking for videos by Latinas/os (inclusive term that describes Chicanos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Caribbeans, Central/South Americans, etc., from the U.S.) for possible inclusion in curated program of videotapes to be presented at the Festival Internacional de Video del Cono Sur taking place in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay and the Festival de Cine Latinoamericano in Italy during 1997. Deadline: Jan. 10, 1997. Send VHS w/ description, reviews, resume & S.A.S.E for return of tape to: Luis Valdovino, Ass't Professor, Fine Arts Dept., Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309; (303) 492-5482; fax: (303) 492-4886.

LO BUDJIT FILMZ AND VIDEOS seeks submissions for *VHS or Less*, show focusing on camcorder movies. Embarass old friends, showcase your dusty old tapes. Large bi-coastal audience. Send to: Lo Budjit, 147 Ave A, Box 1R NY, NY 10009; (212) 533-0866.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic *Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEW YORK'S GUERILLA CINEMA, "The G-Spot," seeks shorts (under 35min). For four weeks in April each night will begin with a short film, followed by one of our two features. Call Brooks (212) 262-2844 or check website www.pygmalion.com/gspot Deadline: Jan. 10, 1997.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS, series broadcasting selected works statewide on public TV, seeks works of any genre (except corporate/instructional) produced by ind. artists currently residing in NC. Modest monetary compensation & telecast filmmaker interview of artist for works selected. Entry fee: $15 for individuals, $5 for students & NC Media Arts Alliance members; separate fee for each submission. Contact: Ellen Walters, NC Visions, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg., UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax: 334-5039; ncvision@hamlet.uncg.edu.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/Williamsburg area of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Please call or send SASE for info: Ocularis, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

PAUL ROBESON BIRTHDAY COMMITTEE seeks film artists who have produced films about Robeson, or would consider doing so. DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, IL 60637; (312) 373-0994; fax: (708) 386-2414.

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE currently seeking experimental, avant-garde, ind., underground, alternative, psychedelic, political/social, animation, shock, music, schizophrenic, doc., short films & videos for weekly late night TV program & local screenings. Submit VHS tape/info (& SASE for return) to: Peripheral Produce, Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240-0835.

REAL TV looking for dynamic videos: news, weath-

er, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." *Real TV*, syndicated, daily video magazine, will showcase compelling videos from around the world—from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the '90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact: *Real TV*, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

SAN FRANCISCO SHORT FILMS, new organization dedicated to supporting short narrative film as unique art form, seeks films under 35 min. for screening programs. Filmmaker must be resident of 415, 510, 408, 707, 916, or 209 area codes in Northern CA. Films must have been completed on or after Jan. 1, 1993. All formats OK, but submit preview in VHS to: Box 424520, San Francisco, CA 94142. Submissions can also be brought to monthly meeting, first Thursday each month, 7 pm, at Colossal Studios, 15th St. & DeHaro.

SAUCE GALLERY AND MOMENTA ART, two alternative spaces in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, currently accepting entries for on-going film/video series. Mission is to identify and exhibit compelling new work no longer than 30 min. All formats & genres. Submit in VHS w/ SASE & brief description of work to: Sauce Gallery, 173A North 3rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; attn: Lisa Schroeder (718) 486-8992 or Laura Parnes (718) 782-8907.

SEEKING WORKS by ind. filmmakers. 16mm, 8mm & video for screening series in downtown Manhattan. Send VHS copy to: Leslie Napoles, c/o CRC, 7th fl., 435 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

SHORT FILM & VIDEO: All genres, any medium, 1 min. to 1 hr. Unconventional, signature work in VHS or 3/4" for nat'l broadcast. Submit to: Edge TV, 7805 Sunset Blvd., ste. 203, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

SHOW YOUR SHORTS, cable access program seeks shorts. Airs on Ch. 34 on first Sunday of every month at 4:30 pm. Send VHS copies of films no longer than 20 min. to: Catherine Delbuono, Box 987 NY, NY 10011

SUPER-8 FILM OPPORTUNITY Send previews of short films no more than 20 min. on VHS or super-8 prints. Enclose short bio, description, running time, filmography & any stills or portraits you have. Enclose $5, SASE, and self-addressed stamped postcard. Send previews ASAP to: Barbara Rosenthal, 727 Ave. of Americas, NY, NY 10010-2712; (212) 924-4893.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TV-1 PRODUCTIONS seeking footage on Cuba for upcoming doc. Every aspect of life in the island welcome. Formats: Hi8, SVHS, 3/4", Beta, DVD, 8mm & 16mm. Tapes returned. Payment negotiable. For more info, contact: Marcos N. Suarez, 2102 Empire Central, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 357-2186.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to: Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107,

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VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre and length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi 8 or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone & SASE to: VideoSpace, attn: general submissions, 9 Myrtle St, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Publications

SHORT VIDEO MOVIES: To finish our handbook on the short video prod. process, we want to include your experiences w/ improvised scenarios or scripts, nonprofessionals or pros. Let's trade reels. Contact: David Shepherd, Group Creativity, 2 Washington Sq. Vill. #70, New York, NY 10012; (212) 777-7830.

Resources • Funds

APERTURE INC., a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers grant of $10,000 to first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. For info on 1996 Aperture Grant, send SASE to: Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on ongoing basis. Contact BFVF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 536-3576; bfvf@aol.com.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problems; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services.

Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from: PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax: 591-1114; piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA Deadline for grant applications: Dec. 2. Also seeking media activists in video and film to serve on a three-year term beginning in '97. Deadline: Dec. 20, 1996. Send letter and current resume to: Jan Strout, Program Officer, The Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway #500, NY, NY 10012.

POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION gives financial assistance to artists of recognizable merit & financial need working as mixed-media or installation artists. Grants awarded throughout yr: $1,000-$30,000. For guidelines, write: Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 725 Park Ave., NY, NY 10021.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports ind. doc. film & video on human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. 2 levels considered: works-in-progress & preproduction seed money. Grants for works-in-progress up to $50,000, w/ average of $25,000. Awards for seed funds range from $10,000 to $15,000. Send proposals to: Diane Weyermann, Director of Arts and Cultural Regional Program, Open Society Institute, 888 7th Ave., #3100, NY, NY 10106.

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postprod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER dedicated to educators interested in video technology as learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact: Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on ongoing basis for its Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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MEMORANDA: con'd from p. 64

The board welcomed newly elected board members Jim McKay and Peter Lewnes. Jim Klein resigned from the board effective September 1, 1996. Cynthia Lopez, as first alternate, will serve the final year of Klein's term.

To follow-up the June decision to add a student representative to the FIVF board, Hammer announced the AIVF Student Committee will meet on November 14 at 6:00 pm at AIVF. The AIVF student representative will be chosen at this time.

The board agreed there will be no further pursuit of sanctioning salons as official chapters of AIVF. The current structure allows salons much more flexibility and requires a minimum amount of effort to maintain on the part of AIVF staff.

The board voted in favor of writing a letter of complaint to the Sundance Festival Committee in response to the Festival's new submission policy which does not allow makers to premier their work at domestic festivals prior to submission to Sundance.

The board will hold an extra meeting in January to address concerns about the organization's advocacy efforts. Invited speakers to the meeting will be asked to discuss how AIVF can better define its position for the current and future situation of the field.

Lerner reported that AIVF's earned income is running ahead of last year. Lerner also noted that the marketing campaign to university and college libraries and bookstores is currently underway.

Development Consultant Jodi Magee will continue to locate and expand the organization's grant resources. She will work to establish new relationships between AIVF/FIVF and potential grant making institutions while cultivating existing ones.

Independent Editor Patricia Thomson reported that about 500 members responded to the survey mailed with the election ballots in June 1996. The editorial staff is still processing them. She also reported that ad rates will increase effective January, 1997.

Membership Coordinator Leslie Fields reported on the success of the summer workshop series. Lerner and Fields will plan another series for summer 1997. Fields noted that the AIVF web site is in currently in redevelopment. The site should be finished by January.

The board held a lengthy discussion about the development of the reserve fund campaign. They developed a list of people to approach for contributions. Board members will continue to refine the list while working on the mission statement for the campaign. Lerner will set up an account that is specifically for the reserve fund. Salons will be enlisted to help in the campaign.

The next meeting of the board was set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, January 24-26, 1997.

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STAFF NEWS

Many thanks to AIVF advocacy director **Cleo Caucolidis**, who is moving to Athens, Greece to continue her career as a freelance journalist. She said it's only a three month stint...only the gods and time will tell. Good luck, Cleo!

EVENTS

ADVOCACY FORUM

Broadcast Spectrum Giveaway
AIVF and Libraries for the Future (LFF) will hold an advocacy forum on the Broadcast Spectrum Giveaway debate. Guest speakers include **Sam Husseini**, FAIR; **Jamie McClelland**, LFF; and **Mike Eisenmenger**, Rutgers University. *Contact:* Cynthia Lopez at (212) 682-7446 for more info. Please call AIVF's RSVP line to reserve a spot: (212) 807-1400 x 301.
When: Wed., Dec. 4, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office

3RD ANNUAL AIVF HOLIDAY PARTY



Just love to have a good time, don't you? Come eat, drink, and celebrate with us at our 3rd Annual Holiday Party. Last year was a blast, so you know this year will be even better. RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x 301
When: Monday, Dec. 9, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office

OPEN SCREENING PROGRAM

AIVF members are eligible to submit nonfiction works-in-progress to the NewCity's DocuClub for screening. The screenings take place on the first Monday of the month in midtown Manhattan, and feature one or two works with discussion following. *Reservations necessary to attend screenings: (212) 753-9630 x 171.*
When: Monday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.
Where: NewCity Prod., 635 Madison Ave., Suite 1101 (between 59 & 60 St.)
To submit work: Susan Kaplan, (212) 753-1326

SCREENING/CONFERENCE ROOM AVAILABLE

AIVF offers a screening and conference room for a small fee to AIVF members *only*. It comes equipped with a conference table, 1/2" VCR and 3/4" VTR, and a 19" monitor. The space holds up to 30 people, and it's great for private screenings and/or group meetings. Available weekdays, weeknights, and some weekends. Contact Leslie Fields at (212) 807-1400 x 222 for more information.

AIVF OFFICE CLOSING

Please take note that AIVF will be closed from December 21, 1997 to January 3, 1997. We will reopen on Monday, January 6. Have a Happy Holiday and a Great New Year!!

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

Creative and Career Development
19 W. 34th Street, Penthouse Suite, New York, 10001; (212) 957-9376, Contact: Michelle Frank, CSW
Licensed psychotherapist with film and TV experience assists indie filmmakers with creative and career development. 10% discount on individual sessions. AIVF members only.

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. *Note:* Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6 pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 pm.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 pm.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Denver, CO
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

Houston, TX:
When: Last Wednesday of each month, 7 pm.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: David Mendel, (713) 529-4185

Kansas City, MO:
When: 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:30 pm.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

Norwalk, CT:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

San Deigo, CA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact:: Carroll Blue, (619) 594-6591

St. Louis, MO:
When: 3rd Thursday of each month, 7 pm.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Tucson, AZ:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC:
Call for dates and times.
Where: Herb's Restaurant, 1615 Rhode Island Ave., NW
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x4.

MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

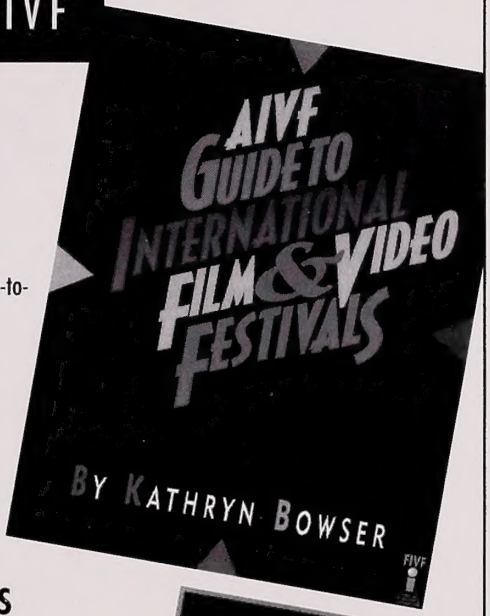
The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and Foundation for Independent Video and Filmmakers (FIVF) met in New York on September 28-29, 1996. Attending were Robb Moss (President), Bart Weiss (Vice President), Loni Ding (Vice President), Robert Richter (Treasurer), Diane Markrow (Secretary), Carroll Blue, Barbara Hammer, Cynthia Lopez, Peter Lewnes, Jim McKay, Susan Wittenberg, and Ruby Lerner (ex officio). Absent were James Schamus and Norman Wang.

Memoranda: con'd on p. 63

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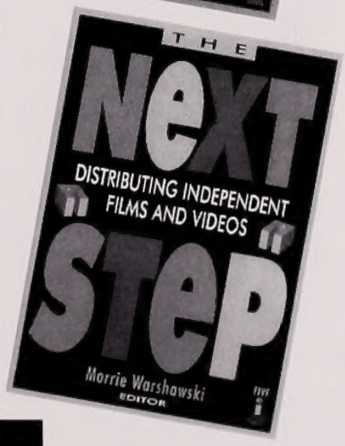
The 4th edition of FIVF's best seller is a completely indexed and easy-to-read compendium of over 400 international film and video festivals, with contact information, entry regulations, deadlines, categories, accepted formats, and much more. The Festival Guide includes information on all types of festivals: small and large, specialized and general, domestic and foreign.



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Edited by Kathryn Bowser $24.95/$19.95 members
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A must-read for film and video makers searching for the right distributor. The Distributors Guide presents handy profiles of nearly 200 commercial and nonprofit distributors, practical information and company statistics on the type of work handled, primary markets, relations with producers, marketing and promotion, foreign distribution and contacts. Fully indexed, this is the best compendium of distribution information especially tailored for independent producers available.



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"In making *Picture Bride* we turned many times to AIVF/FIVF publications for the facts on fundraising, production and distribution. Their books are up-to-date, well organized and accessible. Best of all, it's getting the 411 without the schmooze.
Kayo Hatta – "Picture Bride"

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Frederick Marx – "Hoop Dreams"

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